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General Assembly

Seventy-first session

Official Records

22nd plenary meeting
Saturday, 24 September 2016, 9 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

In the absence of the President, Ms. Young (Belize), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdallah, Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman.

Mr. Abdallah (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin my statement by congratulating the President and his country, the Republic of Fiji, on his election to preside over the General Assembly at its seventy-first session. I am confident that his wisdom and competence will enable him to steer the work of the Assembly to a successful conclusion. I would also like to assure him that my delegation stands ready to cooperate with him in achieving our desired goals. Nor should I miss this opportunity to express our appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft of the Kingdom of Denmark, for his effectiveness in conducting the work of the Assembly at its seventieth session, which was key to ensuring that agreements were reached on several international issues.

I would also like to put on record our appreciation for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's tireless efforts over the past 10 years to serve the shared interests of the international community and bring the work of the Organization and its organs up to the expectations of Member States.

Since its establishment in 1945, the United Nations has attained a position of esteem in international relations. In that regard, we would like to express our appreciation to the Organization's founding States, especially the permanent members of the Security Council, for their efforts to maintain international peace and security despite the challenges they continue to face. They have made the Organization a safe haven in which States can settle their disputes and differences by peaceful means, based on the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, which uphold the principles of mutual respect, good-neighbourliness, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and peaceful coexistence.

We would be remiss if we failed to point out that the world has seen many successes and positive developments, politically, socially, economically, scientifically and technically, which today have made us closer and more interdependent than ever before. However, we are still dealing with many challenges and tragedies that humankind can never forget, challenges that should motivate us all to work harder in support of international peace and security.

We in the Sultanate of Oman continue to believe that there is a solution for every problem as long as our interests converge, the necessary political will is there and we act in a concerted way. That is because by their nature people are inclined to love peace, understanding and peaceful coexistence, which serve the interests

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of all parties based on the golden rule that we should do unto others as we would do unto ourselves. My country is therefore among the States that have adopted a policy of dialogue, negotiation and conciliation in order to settle disputes by peaceful means, based on the provisions of Chapter VI of the Charter and on the standards and traditions of our human heritage. Thanks to the peaceful diplomatic approach of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said of Oman, we have succeeded in establishing friendly relations and cooperation with countries all over the world that we are keen to maintain and develop in every area for the interests and for the good of the Sultanate and other countries.

We should also take this opportunity to emphasize the centrality of the Palestinian question for stability in the Middle East. If we cannot reach a comprehensive and just solution to the issue, it is difficult to imagine the possibility of establishing normal relations between the States and peoples of the region in a way that can foster mutual trust and coexistence. Despite the efforts of the international community and the various initiatives to help the Palestinians and the Israelis to reach an agreement on a road map that would look after the interest of both parties, all efforts failed to achieve the desired outcome. Therefore, we would like to renew our call to the international community to intensify efforts through a new perspective that would enable the concerned parties to reach a comprehensive and just settlement that would end the long conflict.

We would also like to express our appreciation to the United Nations and to the Special Envoys of the Secretary-General for their efforts to reach peaceful settlements to crises in a number of States in the Middle East, especially the Syrian Arab Republic, the Republic of Yemen and Libya. However, we should note that the situations in those States have suffered serious setbacks, which threaten international peace and security.

We believe in the importance of adhering to the principle of dialogue in order to resolve disputes by peaceful means. Since the onset of the crises in the three aforementioned States, the Sultanate of Oman has sought to reconcile points of view with the parties concerned and to encourage them to reject differences and resume negotiation. The Sultanate has hosted several meetings towards that end, in coordination with the United Nations. In that respect, we cannot fail to pay tribute to the laudable efforts of the State of Kuwait for hosting the Yemen peace negotiations. We laud, in particular, the efforts exerted by His Highness Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to bridge the gap in the views of Yemeni parties. The goal has been to achieve a win-win solution to the conflict through peaceful negotiations.

In closing, we must emphasize the need for the spirit of joint international action, which makes it incumbent upon all of us to rid ourselves of the negative aspects of the past and concentrate on the positive elements of the future. Our goal should be to develop relations, enhance cooperation, deepen interests between States and peoples, and settle differences through dialogue that is based on the principles and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and international legal principles. By doing so, the United Nations will remain the beacon of peace for all States.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I am pleased to extend to Mr. Thomson, and through him to the friendly country of Fiji, my sincere congratulations on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session. I wish him sustained success in the discharge of the noble tasks with which he has been entrusted. I also wish to express our appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft for his outstanding contribution and his efficient and highly professional management of the work of the General Assembly at the seventieth session.

We commend the extraordinary efforts exerted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon during his two terms with a view to achieving the goals of the international Organization in establishing the foundations of peace and security in the world. We share the hope he expressed in his statement at the beginning of the general debate (see A/71/PV.8) that the Paris Agreement on Climate Change will enter into force by the end of this year. We also endorse his proposal for the establishment of a high-level panel to find practical solutions that will improve decision-making mechanisms at the United Nations. We support the continued pursuit of the great achievements that took place in all domains, notably in the fields of education and health, during the past decade. I seize this opportunity to express to the Secretary-General our thanks and appreciation for all that he has accomplished at the helm of the Organization and to wish him every success in his future endeavours in the service of his own country and the world at large.

The theme of this general debate, "The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world", testifies to our collective will and earnest desire to achieve those Goals. Under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, my country attaches great importance to the Goals and has already started to implement them, as is documented in international reports. My country will persevere in its commitment, consistent with its ambitious national plans and programmes, fully convinced that the achievement of the Goals promises a bright future for its citizens.

A few days ago, the United Nations held an important demonstration of its relationship with the Kingdom of Bahrain, namely, the Sustainable Development Award ceremony hosted by Bahrain on 23 September on the margins of the General Assembly. There, His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa's Sustainable Development Award was presented to Professor Anna Tibaijuka, former Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), a deserving laureate. The presentation underlines the Kingdom's vision of sustainable development as a value that it not only seeks to achieve but also one that it seeks to promote by supporting all endeavours aimed at realizing it throughout the world.

The achievements of Bahraini women at the international level — notably by being elected to membership of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Executive Board of UN-Women and the fact that Bahrain received first place internationally for the highest growth rate of women's participation in economic activities, as documented in a report of the International Labour Organization this year — testify to the close cooperation between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United Nations and the keen interest of my country, represented by the Supreme Council for Women under the leadership of Her Royal Highness Princess Sabika Bint Ibrahim Al-Khalifa, in enhancing the empowerment of Bahraini women nationally and internationally and accelerating their participation in all Government and community sectors as a principal component that has contributed, and will continue to contribute, to the process of community development and progress.

"Development that does not have the citizen as its target is futile and undesirable". Those were the words of His Majesty the King at the launch of the Bahrain Economic Vision 2030, clearly affirming that the well-being, happiness and stability of our citizens are the main pillars of development in all fields and that the Government's efforts to achieve the global development goals are in parallel with its national economic vision. The Government's action plan and its United Nations Development Programme country programme document both stress that Bahrain will continue to guarantee to all citizens, men and women alike, the enjoyment of all their constitutional rights. We shall steadfastly pursue our approach to progress, prosperity and advancement, despite all political and economic challenges and any attempt to divert us from our national task.

Development goes hand in hand with the security and stability of the individual citizen and of society at large. Neither can be achieved in isolation from the other, without a stable and secure State, with good governance and solid and effective institutions. Such is the road map that should be followed in all States generally and in the Middle East in particular, where the enormous challenges have been considered grave threats to international peace and security. It is for that reason that protection of the foundations of the nation State in our own countries and preventing their collapse in other countries is the basis for sustaining security, development and prosperity. It deserves to become the major objective of all actors and groupings of the international community, without double standards or hidden agendas. When united regionally and internationally, we are capable of addressing all those challenges, particularly terrorism.

We should jointly commit ourselves, without hesitation and in full determination, to eradicating all the underlying causes of terrorism, cutting off the sources of financing to terrorists and resolutely and vigorously protecting our societies from the discourse of hate and extremism. In that regard, we assert that anti-terrorism measures will not be effective through legislation and laws that contravene the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law. The approach taken by the United States Congress in passing the Justice against the Sponsors of Terrorism Act jeopardizes international relations based on the principle of the equal sovereignty of States and their sovereign immunity. It constitutes a dangerous precedent in relations between nations and threatens the stability of the international system, which in turn adversely affects international efforts to combat terrorism.

The question of displaced persons and refugees is among the serious issues generated by the situation prevailing in some countries in our region. It is negatively impacting development efforts and, if not resolved, will lead to more instability not just in the region, but throughout the world. The Syrian crisis, in all its phases and developments, constitutes the greatest human tragedy of our contemporary world. In a country that just a few years ago welcomed thousands of refugees, the Syrian population today is unable to live in peace and security on its own land. More than half of the Syrian people live as refugees or internally displaced persons, while the situation deteriorates day after day, creating a vacuum exploited by terrorist organizations to consolidate their position and threaten the entire region. We must, as an ethical and human imperative, address those threats, and the international community must act in unison to confront the problem from all angles.

We appreciate the efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Kuwait, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Lebanese Republic and the Republic of Turkey to mitigate the humanitarian predicament of Syrians. We invite the international community to aid the efforts of our countries. We commend the United Nations for its efforts in that respect, which recently culminated in the high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants and the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1, annex). Follow-up actions to implement the provisions of the Declaration will undoubtedly have a positive impact.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has consistently supported the aspirations of the Syrian people to build, in accord with their own will, a civil State with a national fabric rich in cultural and human heritage and diverse in its various components, with a view to restoring the spirit of love and tolerance. We call on all States with leverage in the Syrian crisis, notably the United States and the Russian Federation, to join efforts to achieve a political solution to the crisis along the lines of the Geneva communiqué and Security Council resolution 2254 (2015). Furthermore, it is imperative to implement Security Council resolution 2165 (2014), which stipulates the direct, unfettered and immediate delivery of humanitarian assistance to the entire Syrian territory, thereby saving that beloved country and its people from a tragedy we all want to see ended, avoiding the collapse of the remaining State institutions, preserving Syria's territorial integrity, eradicating all terrorist organizations at large in the country and putting an end to the regional meddling, whether direct or by proxy, that hinders the peaceful settlement of the crisis.

In the same vein, we encourage all efforts in Iraq to overcome the problems facing the reconstruction of the State and its institutions and the fulfilment of the will of the Iraqi people through the participation of all political factions, without external pressure. We stress the need for perseverance in the efforts to re-establish State authority over the entire national territory by ousting the terrorist organizations and to combat the criminal and inhumane practices of extremist militias against Iraqis and their neighbours under the pretext of fighting terrorism.

We look forward to the day when we shall see an independent Palestinian State, living in peace and security, side by side with the State of Israel. I have no doubt whatsoever that the people of the region, both Arabs and Israelis, are eager to see this day and look forward to a just and comprehensive peace. That hope remains contingent on Israel's admission that its security and stability cannot be ensured unless the same holds true for the Palestinian people. Israel needs to be serious about achieving a just and durable peace in the region, with Palestinians and Israelis alike feeling that they are safe and that their future and the future of their children are also safe. An end must be put to the practices that hinder the long-awaited peace, notably the violations against the sanctity of Al-Aqsa mosque that offend the feelings of Muslims all over the world. All illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory should be dismantled. Recognition must be given to the right of the Palestinian people to an independent State, within the 4 June 1967 boundaries, with East Jerusalem as its capital, consistent with international law and instruments and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. Israel should respond positively and in an open spirit to the Arab Peace Initiative, which is still valid and on the table. We continue to embrace the Initiative and shall not back down, as it offers the correct and appropriate approach to laying down the foundation of peace in the region and to promoting cooperation among its nations and States.

With respect to the situation in the Republic of Yemen, the commitment of the Kingdom of Bahrain, a member of the Arab coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen, will remain steadfast. Bahrain has spared no resources or blood to achieve this noble goal, and

we shall continue on that path, no matter how great the sacrifices, until the time when the legitimate Government under the leadership of His Excellency President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour is in a position to take control of the entire territory of Yemen.

We underline the humanitarian role played by the coalition forces and their determination not to target civilians. We demand that the coup d'état forces and their supporters, whose ambition is to take control of the institutions of the State, immediately cease committing any negative actions that hinder stability. We do not stand against any Yemeni party, but we do stand by Yemen and the Yemeni people in their fight against all who try to harm Yemen or control it from outside. We will continue this support until a political settlement is reached and a peaceful solution that puts an end to the suffering of the Yemeni people is implemented.

Such a solution must safeguard the security, stability and unity of the Yemeni people in accordance with international terms of reference, notably the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference and resolution 2216 (2015). We commend the efforts exerted by Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen, and by the State of Kuwait to help find a settlement to the crisis.

With respect to Libya, that brotherly Arab country badly needs all parties to show solidarity, work together to get through the present difficult stage and overcome the challenges that the country faces. Those challenges are obstructing the people's aspirations to live in peace and enjoy the stability of a unified State with robust modern institutions. We welcome the formation of the Government of National Accord and stress the need to provide it with the necessary support in order for the Libyan House of Representatives to build the necessary confidence that will enable it to lead the country, discharge its duties and responsibilities and rid the country of terrorist organizations by eradicating them.

With respect to the issue of the Western Sahara, the Kingdom of Bahrain underlines the need to find a political settlement on the basis of the Moroccan initiative for self-government and the relevant Security Council resolutions, so that the territorial integrity of Morocco may be guaranteed and that the security and stability in the region may be enhanced. We welcome the return of Morocco to the African Union and the resumption of its vital role on the continent.

With regard to the Islamic Republic of Iran, we in the GCC and all Arab countries have spared no effort to build the best relations possible with that neighbouring country on the basis of good-neighbourliness and respect for the sovereignty of States, consistent with the practices and principles of international relations between States. We have not hesitated for an instant to build bridges and seek to improve relations with it. However, despite all these efforts and sincere wishes, there has never been a serious response from Iran. The efforts we undertook ended either in an impasse or with a creation of new problems and crises that obligated us to return to square one.

We still hear the same irresponsible sectarian discourse from Iran and have witnessed the damage done to our bilateral and multilateral relations. In the most recent incident, Iranian officials made false allegations against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which is a country that plays a laudable role in efficiently providing hospitality, safety, protection and care for large numbers of pilgrims during the seasons of Hajj and Umrah. No one can deny or minimize the importance of those efforts.

We continue to face Iran's attempts to jeopardize our security and social peace through the support it provides to groups and militias under its authority, such as the terrorists of Hizbullah and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. Iran also continues to occupy three Emirati islands in the Arabian Gulf and refuses mediation for a peaceful settlement.

The situation is clear, and there is no way that it will change if Iran does not undertake a comprehensive change in its foreign policies, put an end to its hostile policies and show an open attitude towards our countries. Doing those things would undoubtedly pave the way for the region to enter a new era of stability and development.

The Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms the need to join efforts aimed at establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, notably nuclear weapons, in the Middle East, including the Arabian Gulf region, while stressing the right of countries to use nuclear power for peaceful purposes. Nuclear power was created only to serve human beings and to improve their lives, not to harm them or be used as lethal weapons

that might obliterate entire cities and kill millions of innocent people.

We have before us an opportunity to overcome the challenges facing us and maintain the strength and cohesion of our nations and peoples. We belong to a region that has made tremendous human contributions and great civilizational achievements. Our region has contributed effectively to all that we witness and live out today by way of the human progress we have contributed to in various fields of endeavour, including the sciences. All of that was possible only because those who lived in the region did so in an atmosphere of full security and harmony, without divisions based on ethnic, ideological or religious differences. We should remember that fact as we work to build the future we seek for our countries and future generations with a view to making important contributions to human civilization that we can be proud of.

I would repeat here a few words by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa:

> "The Kingdom of Bahrain and its people epitomize the principles of friendship, tolerance, mutual respect and openness to the world. We are proud of our diversity and our solid belief that every individual has the right to enjoy a safe and decent life."

Those words, characteristic of the Kingdom of Bahrain and its citizens, clearly reflect the spirit of the region and the aspirations of its people.

I would like to conclude by saying that the Kingdom of Bahrain, with its leadership and enlightened people eager to embrace the love and peace of the world and all its peoples, will remain faithful to the lofty human values and principles on which we have prided ourselves since time immemorial. As we confront the challenges to the Kingdom's safety and achievements, we shall hold fast to these values, while remembering that they illuminate our path towards a safe and stable society in which everyone enjoys security, prosperity and progress.

The Acting President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Sushma Swaraj, Minister for External Affairs of the Republic of India.

Ms. Swaraj (India) (*spoke in Hindi; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): On behalf of India and on my own behalf, I congratulate Mr. Peter Thomson on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his service to the United Nations, the largest peace movement in history.

A year has passed since I stood here at this hallowed rostrum to address the members of the international community (see A/70/PV.22). Since then, many things have changed in the world around us — some for the better, some for the worse, and many that have been a cause for great concern. There can be no better platform to ponder our actions and our achievements over the past year. We must remember that we will be defined not just by our actions but, equally, by our inaction.

A number of issues have been debated in the General Assembly, from the necessity of global partnerships in sharing new vaccines and promoting access to affordable drugs to counter antimicrobial resistance to the need for faster implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, from the challenges of ensuring well-ordered mobility of productive human resources to the necessity of adequate consultations with troop-contributing countries before framing mandates for United Nations peacekeeping operations. However, since my time is limited, I would therefore focus on only some of the most pressing issues facing the international community.

The true challenges of our time are to end the curse of harsh poverty, which still lurks in so many corners of our world, to ensure that the fruits of growing prosperity reach those who need it most, to take forward the mission of gender equality and protect women where progress on gender issues has lapsed, and to ensure peace across borders, not least because there can be no prosperity without peace.

I congratulate the President of the General Assembly for giving priority to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by making them central to the theme of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly. I am happy that the 17 Goals adopted by the Assembly are in line with the development vision of my Government, which has been geared in recent years towards the achievement of these very objectives.

Under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan campaign — the Clean India mission — more than 400,000 toilets have been constructed in over 200,000 schools. Similarly, in terms of gender equality, the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign — Educate the Girl Child, Save the Girl Child programme — has become a nationwide movement led

by women. The Make in India initiative is receiving international acclaim. Under the Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana initiative, the largest financial inclusion programme the world has ever seen, nearly 250 million bank accounts have been opened for the poor. Digital India is transforming the country. Under the Skill India Initiative, a number of programmes have been undertaken to enable young people to take advantage of the demographic dividend. Those initiatives have added a new dimension to India's growth story, making it the fastest-growing major economy in the world at a time of slow global growth.

We are all aware that one sixth of humankind lives in India. Accordingly, global success in realizing the SDGs depends on the success achieved in India. We are committed to the wholehearted implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a national effort. We have decided to dedicate one day in each session of our Parliament to discussions relating solely to the SDGs, which will enable us to consistently monitor the progress made on them and give us good results. However, for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in a globalized world, national efforts need to be supplemented by international cooperation.

Climate change is yet another serious challenge we are having to confront. There are enough resources on this planet to fulfil everyone's needs, but not enough to satisfy anyone's greed, for greed is limitless. In that context, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has championed a new concept, namely, climate justice. If we respect nature, nature will respect and nurture us and future generations. However, if we exploit nature mindlessly then we must be mindful that nature will unleash its fury upon us. In different parts of the world, we have already seen nature drift towards the unnatural — from torrential rains to excessive heat, from tsunamis to storms and cloudbursts.

We must curb reckless consumption and adopt lifestyles in harmony with nature. Yoga, the storehouse of India's ancient wisdom, epitomizes a sustainable lifestyle. I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the unprecedented global response to the International Day of Yoga, which has been celebrated for the past two years.

In the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities has been acknowledged and accepted. That makes it clear that, while our responsibility is common, our obligations are different. Developed nations must discharge their responsibility in the search for the common good through finance and technology transfer.

India has launched an ambitious domestic effort to transform our energy mix and attain 40 per cent energy from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030. The massive investments required entail a predictable and stable environment, towards which we are actively working. Additionally, our ground-breaking initiative for an International Solar Energy Alliance is intended to make efficient solar technology available for all.

I assure the General Assembly that India will continue to play a leading role in combating climate change. We have carefully chosen the date to submit our instrument of ratification of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which will be 2 October, the anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi, who epitomized a lifestyle with the smallest possible carbon footprint.

Let me now turn to a subject of critical importance, and which deeply concerns every member of the Assembly. This month we marked the fifteenth anniversary of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack on this city. Tragically, less than 15 days ago, another attempt at killing innocents was made in an act of terror on this same city. We, who have suffered in Uri, Kashmir, recently, understand the pain inflicted by the same forces. The world has been battling this scourge for a very long time. However, despite the blood and tears of innocent victims, attacks this year alone in Kabul, Dhaka, Istanbul, Mogadishu, Brussels, Bangkok, Paris, Pathankot and Uri, as well as the daily barbaric tragedies in Syria and Iraq, remind us that these malevolent forces have yet to be defeated.

We must acknowledge that terrorism is undoubtedly the greatest of all violations of human rights. We must accept this fact as a first principle. Terrorism targets the innocent and kills indiscriminately. Having gone far beyond affecting individuals or nations, it is a crime against humanity itself. But it is important to ask: who is behind this and who benefits from it? Terrorists do not own banks or weapons factories, so let us ask the question of who finances these terrorists, who arms them and who provides them sanctuary. Similar questions were asked by the Vice-President of Afghanistan from this rostrum a few days ago (see A/71/PV.11).

History proves that those who plant the seeds of extremist ideology reap a bitter harvest. The contagion of evil seen in small terrorist groups has grown into a hydra-headed monster backed by technological sophistication that threatens the peace and harmony of our world. We will not be able to win the fight against terrorism by making specious distinctions between the problems of one group and the problems of others — between terrorists who attack some and those who attack others. We do not know who will be the next victim of Frankenstein's monster.

If we want to defeat terrorism, therefore, there is only one way, that is, to unite despite our differences, add steel to our resolve and inject urgency into our response. We need to forget our prejudices and join hands to draw up an effective strategy against terror. That is not an impossible task, provided that we have the will. We can do it, and we must do it; otherwise, future generations will forever hold us to account. And if any nation refuses to join the global strategy, then we must isolate it. That is my simple demand.

There are nations in our midst that still speak the language of terrorism. They nurture it, peddle it and export it. Sheltering terrorists has become the calling card of such nations. We must identify those nations and hold them to account. The nations in which United Nations-designated terrorists roam freely and which lead demonstrations and deliver their poisonous sermons of hate with impunity are as culpable as the very terrorists whom they harbour. There should be no place for such countries in the community of nations.

On 21 September, the Prime Minister of Pakistan used this rostrum to make baseless allegations about human rights violations in my country (see A/71/PV.11). I can say only that those accusing others of human rights violations would do well to look within and see what egregious abuses they are perpetrating in their own countries, including in Baluchistan. The brutality against the Baluch people represents the worst form of State oppression.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan also said that India had come up with preconditions for talks that he found unacceptable. What preconditions was he talking about? Did we impose any preconditions before extending an invitation to him to attend our Government's oath-taking ceremony? Did we impose any preconditions when I went to Islamabad for the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process and agreed to commence the comprehensive bilateral dialogue with Pakistan? Did we impose any preconditions when Prime Minister Modi travelled from Kabul to Lahore? What preconditions? What are we talking about?

We took the initiative to resolve issues not on the basis of conditions, but on the basis of friendship. That is the truth. We have in fact attempted to establish an unprecedented paradigm of friendship in the past two years. We conveyed Eid greetings to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, wished success to his cricket team and extended good wishes for his health and well-being. Did any of that come with preconditions attached?

And what did we get in return? Pathankot, Bahadur Ali and Uri? Are we imposing preconditions or are the Pakistanis now going in a different direction? Bahadur Ali is a terrorist in our custody whose confession is proof of Pakistan's complicity in cross-border terror. But when confronted with such evidence, Pakistan continues to deny it. Pakistan persists in the belief that such attacks will enable it to acquire the territory it covets. My firm advice to Pakistan is to abandon that dream. Let me state unequivocally that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and will always remain so. That is why Pakistan should abandon that dream.

As I said at the outset, we will be judged by both our action and our inaction. What goals have we achieved and what objectives remain unfulfilled? The first pending task for the Assembly is the adoption of the comprehensive convention on international terrorism, which was proposed by India in 1996. In 2016, despite the fact that two decades have elapsed, we have yet to conclude an agreement. As a result, we are unable to develop a standard under which terrorists shall be prosecuted or extradited. I therefore appeal to the General Assembly that it act with fresh resolve and urgency to adopt that critical convention.

The second pending task is Security Council reform. Just as we need a more contemporary approach to combating terrorism, we also need a less outdated Security Council, which currently reflects the world order of a bygone era. The vast majority of nations share the belief that the United Nations should not remain frozen in 1945, which serves only the interests of a few. Whether it is a question of institutions or issues, we must come to terms with present-day realities and the challenges we have before us. An expansion in the permanent and non-permanent Council categories of

membership in order to reflect contemporary realities is therefore an urgent necessity. We must move forward substantively through the intergovernmental negotiations towards a text-based negotiation.

If both of the long-pending issues that I mentioned are addressed during the presidency of Mr. Thomson, then the success of the seventy-first session will be assured.

The twenty-first century has begun in the shadow of turmoil, but we can turn it into a golden age in the history of civilization through united and concerted efforts. But we must remember that what happens tomorrow will depend on what we do today.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore.

Mr. Balakrishnan (Singapore): It is a special honour for me to address the General Assembly on behalf of Singapore, a tiny island city-State that is sometimes referred to as a tiny red dot.

The United Nations is essential for our survival and prosperity, as it is in particular for all small States. We are usually on the receiving end of the decisions and actions of large Powers. Fortunately, the General Assembly affirms the principle that all nations, large or small, rich or poor, have an equal stake and an equal right to participate in shaping the discourse on global issues.

The year 2016 has been a year of increased uncertainty and volatility. We have seen sluggish growth and poor job creation in the major economies, which have been accompanied by growing xenophobia and disillusionment with mainstream politics. We have witnessed rising nationalism, populism and protectionism, which have clouded the political discourse and confounded electoral outcomes everywhere. The conflicts in Syria, Yemen and Libya continue unabated, with serious repercussions beyond the region, including causing unprecedented flows of refugees. Terrorism remains a clear and present threat to international peace and security, which has been amplified by social media, and has been used so skilfully by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) and other terrorist groups to spread radical ideas and promote violent extremism.

South-East Asia, the region where I come from, has also become a fertile recruiting ground for ISIS. In fact, we know that more than 1,000 men and women, including some Singaporeans, have gone to the Middle East to fight for ISIS. Those people have been indoctrinated with extremist ideology, trained with combat skills and killed people — and everyone knows that it is always easier to kill the second time around. They will further pose a significant risk as they seek to promote violence at home, overthrow legitimate Governments and establish a caliphate in South-East Asia. Singapore is committed to working with its friends and partners to address the threat of violent extremism and terrorism by exchanging intelligence and sharing our own experience with deradicalization programmes.

While that is taking place, we also recall the Ebola virus epidemic in 2014 and the current zika infections. They are stark reminders that global health remains a concern. We all need to work with the World Health Organization to keep our countries safe, while remaining open, connected and functioning.

In an uncertain world, small States like Singapore will have to work that much harder just to stay afloat. Small boats on a rough sea are much more likely to be tossed and overturned than a large tanker with heavy ballast. For our survival and our prosperity, small States have to stay open and connected to the world. But, by definition, our very openness makes us vulnerable to external shocks and threats. Small States like ours do not have the option of retreating inwards or opting out of the global system.

It is a reality that the world will become more and more interdependent. In such an environment, no country can succeed on its own, even if a country is not an island State like mine. To achieve global security and prosperity, we need to work with one another to seek win-win outcomes. I realize that, inevitably, there will be competition and rivalry between States, especially among the major Powers. But I want to make this point: relations between States need not be a zero-sum game. All countries benefit when there is peace and stability, and that is essential for building partnerships and economic cooperation everywhere.

Three elements are crucial for the survival and prosperity of small States: first, a rules-based multilateral world order; secondly, international partnership and cooperation; and, thirdly, sustainable development. Allow me to elaborate.

On the first point, a rules-based multilateral system enables all States to deal with each other in a fair,

transparent and predictable manner. The United Nations represents an international world order based on rules, norms and principles. We emphatically reject the notion that might is right. That is why small States are often the strongest proponents of the United Nations. For us, the United Nations represents a rules-based international order, and we believe that is a precondition for our very existence as independent, sovereign States.

The second essential element is international partnership and cooperation. Some of the most significant challenges of our time are transnational in nature. Examples include global economic growth, climate change, epidemics and terrorism. Therein lies the importance of the United Nations.

The recent successful conclusion of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change last November was a good example of how countries around the world could come together to solve a problem posed to the global commons. That the Paris Agreement will likely enter into force less than seven months after it was opened for signature is a confidence-booster for the United Nations system. Singapore is proud to have played its part by actively participating in negotiations and to have been part of the early wave of countries that deposited their instruments of ratification at the high-level event on the entry into force of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change on 21 September this year.

A collective voice for small States speaks louder, and our collective action has been an effective catalyst for change at the United Nations and globally. I am pleased to note that, under the chairmanships of Grenada, Nauru and now Maldives, the Alliance of Small Island States played a catalytic role during the climate-change negotiations. Similarly, the Forum of Small States brings together 107 member States to exchange ideas and support each other in our common concerns. The Global Governance Group, also known as the 3-G, provides a platform for approximately 30 small and medium-sized countries to exchange views on global governance and contribute to the discussions of the Group of 20 (G-20). The 3-G has helped to channel the views of a broad range of countries to the G-20 presidency, thereby making the G-20 process more inclusive.

The third important element for the survival and prosperity of small States is sustainable development. Singapore believes that there are two key prerequisites for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The first prerequisite is the rule of law. I made the point earlier that, at the international level, a rules-based system is essential for all States, especially small States, in order for us to cooperate and to safeguard our rights. But a commitment to the rule of law at the domestic level is equally important. Without good governance, transparency, strong institutions and a clear legal framework, development can neither be sustainable nor benefit ordinary people.

The second prerequisite in that context is international partnerships. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be achieved only through collaboration and partnership. Multilateral processes, such as the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), to be held in Ecuador in October, are important avenues to help advance the SDGs, especially SDG 11. The draft new urban agenda to be adopted by the Habitat III Conference will highlight the link between urbanization and sustainable development and provide a framework for cities and Governments around the world to collaborate and find sustainable solutions.

Another important issue that requires cooperation involves the sustainable management of our forests, the prevention of land degradation and the loss of biodiversity form. This issue is addressed by SDG 15 in the 2030 Agenda. In South-East Asia, transboundary haze from forest and peatland fires started by human beings have impaired the health of millions of people, compromised the safety of aircraft navigation, damaged our regional economies and accelerated climate change. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) adopted a road map to achieve what we hope will be a haze-free ASEAN by 2020. We need to strengthen partnerships among Governments, the private sector, civil-society organizations and other important stakeholders with a view to addressing the root of the problem. That is a long-term challenge that requires sustained attention and continued collaboration among countries in our region and beyond.

Developing countries need international support and assistance in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Singapore is fully committed to helping other developing countries build capacity and enhance human capital, and I declare this on behalf

of a country that has only human resources and human capital to offer.

Since 1992, the Singapore Cooperation Programme has provided training to more than 100,000 officials from other developing countries. Last year, in a statement made at the United Nations Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, we launched from this rostrum (see A/70/PV.10) a new sustainable development programme through which we are working with such United Nations agencies as the United Nations Development Programme, UN-Water and UN-Habitat to support fellow developing countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Singapore has also tailored training programmes for small island developing States in areas including sustainable development, climate change and public governance.

Small States make up more than half of the States Members of the United Nations. To quote Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's statement at the twentieth anniversary of the Forum of Small States, in 2012,

> "Being small does not mean the absence of big ideas".

> The Secretary-General has been a strong supporter of small States, and we thank him for his leadership and support. I think we should also recognize the important contributions he has made to sustainable development and climate change during his two terms as Secretary-General.

In conclusion, let me say that small States, despite our size, have made significant contributions to the international community. We have helped to build consensus and find solutions to key global issues, including climate change. Small States can play an even greater role, provided we work together. Ultimately, small States need the United Nations to create the framework for building partnerships, promoting mutual development and pursuing peace and security within a rules-based multilateral system.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Luis Filipe Lopes Tavares, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Communities and Defence of the Republic of Cabo Verde.

Mr. Lopes Tavares (Cabo Verde) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): It is with great pleasure that we participate in this session of the General Assembly under the wise presidency of Mr. Peter Thomson, at a time when we are facing great challenges and witnessing humankind's legitimate desires and aspirations for a world of greater justice and solidarity. We are particularly proud and pleased to see a representative from a small island developing State conducting the work of the Assembly. We wish him every success during his term in office and assure him of the full cooperation and readiness of the delegation of Cabo Verde.

We also express our gratitude to his predecessor, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, for his excellent work and congratulate him on his tireless efforts and dedication, as well as the transparent and inclusive manner in which he conducted the process of hearing candidates for the position of Secretary-General. We are certain that, under his guidance, the steps taken in the process of reform that is under way in the Organization were important ones.

On behalf of the Government of Cabo Verde, we would also like to applaud and thank His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as we approach the end of his two terms in office. We are grateful for his work and efforts aimed at building international peace and security, seeking relationships based on greater solidarity, brotherhood and fairness, combating poverty and pursuing balanced and sustainable development for all. As a small island developing State, Cabo Verde greatly appreciated his dedication to building a better world, in particular his contribution in successfully organizing and holding the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in Samoa, and for bringing about the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sutainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. With regard to the Paris Agreement, Cabo Verde is pleased with the number of States that have ratified it since April.

As a small island State, Cabo Verde bases its foreign policy on the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and is certain that multilateralism is the most appropriate way to approach issues on the international agenda. Cabo Verde advocates for, and gives priority to, the consensus to keep pursuing international peace and security, promoting and fostering dialogue in conflict resolution and defending international law as indispensable elements for the advancement of humankind.

We note with concern that armed conflicts are proliferating in general, but more particularly

in Africa and the Middle East. We have seen the resurgence of instability in several areas of the world, the unprecedented humanitarian crisis leading to the high number of refugees, irregular migrations, massive violations of human rights, poverty and lack of social cohesion, the widening of the inequality between rich and poorer nations, increasing acts of terrorism and atrocities and the growth of transnational crime, in particular drug trafficking. All of those phenomena, which we have been closely observing and cannot ignore, call for and compel us to act collectively.

The conflicts and sources of tension that persist on the African continent continue to be a concern for us, particularly the situations in Libya, South Sudan, Somalia and Mali. Cabo Verde supports the African Union in the search for solutions to those problems affecting the peace and security of our sister nations. Also with respect to our continent, we welcome Morocco's recent decision to rejoin the African Union. We hope that the reasons that compelled its withdrawal will be resolved in the framework of strengthened regional cooperation among the members of the Arab Maghreb Union, thereby contributing to stability and security in the Sahel region.

With respect to the Middle East, Cabo Verde understands the urgency of finding solutions to existing conflicts and encourages the pursuit of negotiations as the sole means to that end. We wish to specifically refer to the need to resume negotiations leading to a lasting peace that would allow both States — Israel and Palestine — to live side by side in peace and security. In addition, we encourage the continuation of efforts to seek a negotiated solution in Syria that would put an end to the conflict and the suffering of the Syrian people.

Terrorism is a phenomenon that affects all countries and all regions of the planet either directly or indirectly, and no one can remain indifferent to the immense suffering and violence it brings to entire populations. As a global problem, it is one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, and it therefore requires a global response. No country — large or small, rich or poor — is in a position to fight it alone or effectively.

Cabo Verde condemns, without reservations, acts of terrorism in any form or manifestation. We reaffirm our willingness and readiness to cooperate with other States, as well as with the United Nations system, to implement recommendations aimed at preventing and combating this threat. Accordingly, Cabo Verde welcomes the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, launched in January, as well as the results of the fifth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Taking into account the iniquities and inequalities that exist everywhere in some form, it is the understanding of my Government that such a scenario compels us to join forces in our efforts for the promotion and protection of human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Optional Protocols thereto constitute the basis for building more peaceful, just and inclusive societies, with fundamental rights and freedoms at the core of their development. In addition, we consider the role of institutions advocating in favour of human rights and civil society to be indispensable in promoting the rights inherent to human beings.

As was highlighted in the high-level thematic debate on human rights last July, under the theme "Human rights at the centre of the global agenda", the challenges associated with climate change, terrorism, violent extremism, conflicts and humanitarian crises require not only coordinated actions on all levels, but also the continuous fostering of good governance and the rule of law.

Massive violations of those rights and the denial of civil, political, social and cultural rights hinder the full achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly the protection of and the enjoyment of rights by the most vulnerable populations. We are also convinced that the right to development constitutes a basic principle for social cohesion and the reduction of social inequalities within and among nations. As we celebrate the thirty-first anniversary of the Vienna Declaration on the Right to Development, it is important that the principles established therein be observed and fulfilled. With respect to protecting the most vulnerable, Cabo Verde welcomes the Political Declaration adopted at the high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS (resolution 70/266) in June, which advocates for access to treatment, particularly for the most vulnerable, based on the principle of non-discrimination and non-stigmatization.

Cabo Verde recognizes and is concerned with the humanitarian crisis resulting from the large number of refugees and migrants and welcomes the organization and adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1, annex)

during the high-level meeting on migrants and refugees on 19 September. We believe that a significant part of the current difficulties may be overcome through the effective implementation of the planned global compacts on responsibility-sharing for refugees and on safe, regular and orderly migration, which are expected to be adopted next year. Furthermore, we call for the correct implementation of the international conventions related to that issue and stress the need to fight against the root causes of such phenomena.

The theme chosen for this General Assembly session, "The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world", could not have been more appropriate. The choice was judicious and pertinent. It was judicious because a significant portion of the work and attention of the United Nations upto 2030 will indeed focus on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and it was pertinent because, one year after the historic adoption of the 2030 Agenda, we have the opportunity to express our points of view on how we intend to achieve the Goals that we established and overcome the challenges that persist and that could jeopardize the global commitment to leave no one behind.

For us, the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development implies enhancing the means of implementation, particularly financing, technology transfer, capacity-building and participation in international trade. Furthermore, we will need to develop the capacity to implement and follow up on a system to monitor national and regional policies, of which the United Nations system must be aware.

The devastating consequences of natural disasters resulting from climate change, which have a significant impact on the poorest and most vulnerable countries, remind us of the urgency of implementing the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the importance of implementing the recommendations of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Developing a low-carbon economy and creating resiliency and capacity to adapt are no longer just an option for many. They have become essential requirements to build a sustainable economy, particularly in island and archipelago countries, whose survival is being threatened by climate change.

Despite the challenges inherent in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, its ambitious nature offers a unique opportunity to promote international solidarity and cooperation at an unprecedented level in the history of humankind. It is therefore against that backdrop that the United Nations system will be called upon to work as a unified front, avoiding duplication, increasing the monitoring and application of capacity at the national and regional levels, identifying emerging challenges, offering solutions that are not one-size-fits-all, and respecting the idiosyncrasies and specific contexts of each country.

I cannot conclude without noting that Cabo Verde, as a small island State, is striving for the development of a sustainable and dynamic economy with a robust private sector and strengthened regulatory institutions. In order to build a resilient economy that is in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the Government that I am honoured to be a part of plans to develop strategic partnerships so as to reduce risks and minimize weaknesses. However, the challenge facing a small and vulnerable country such as Cabo Verde goes beyond our national capacity to mobilize technical and financial resources and calls for more coordinated and predictable support from the international community in general and the United Nations system in particular.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Frederick Mitchell, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

Mr. Mitchell (Bahamas): Next year at this time, general elections will have been held in the Bahamas. That means that this is the last time that I will address the General Assembly in the present term. For me, it has been a special privilege — one that I have cherished since I first stepped up to this rostrum back in 2002. I wanted to do something special this year, which is why I have the honour of having with me some of my constituents from the Bahamas, and in particular some of the religious and civic leaders of the community of Fox Hill, which I represent: Reverend J. Carl Rahming and Mrs. Rahming, Bishop Carrington Pinder and Mrs. Pinder, Reverend Hartman Nixon and Mrs. Nixon, Reverend Daniel Hall and Mrs. Hall, Reverend Warren Anderson and Mrs. Anderson and Reverend Sherelle Saunders. I also recognize the opposition's spokesman on foreign affairs, the Shadow Minister Hubert Chipman MP and his wife.

It is the policy of the Government of the Bahamas that there should be, insofar as is possible, a multi-partisan consensus on foreign affairs so that there is a seamless transfer of ideas and policies among the

parties. Furthermore, the civic leaders are here because I wanted to show them that, contrary to a prevailing narrative, foreign affairs is not some esoteric academic discipline, but is a real-life exercise connected to the real lives of the people in my constituency and to all the ordinary people around the world. I am glad that they are here.

Jack Lew, the Treasury Secretary of the United States, talked in a recent television interview about the value of starting a bank account, the value of saving and the importance of the involvement of ordinary people in the economy of his country. It was a telling message. But throughout the Caribbean — where the tradition has been to provide a child at birth with a bank account as a gift at the christening — it has become very difficult for a child, not to mention an adult, to open a bank account, so much so that many argue that there is a disincentive to joining the financial system.

Indeed, not only is that a problem in the Caribbean, but a British Minister told me about how one of the leading politicians in his country could not open an account for his 12-year-old daughter because she is what is called a politically exposed person. That is obviously wrong. The problem is that the overregulation imposed on countries by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has led to negative unintended consequences. Suddenly, being a politician or in a politician's family is to run the risk of being refused normal banking services around the world because the risks are too high. That is wrong.

I started my remarks with that concern in order to bring home starkly what all countries from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) region have described as the dangers of de-risking. What I have described is a part of that whole cloth. Banks in the developed world, principally in the United States, are in some cases refusing to cash the checks of some Caribbean banks because they say the risk of policing the CARICOM banks on the issue of compliance with the new rules is too high and the business that banks get from such transactions is too low. So, such services have been stripped away across the Caribbean.

This is the same Bahamas and Caribbean that tens of millions of people from the United States and Europe visit every year. The visitors expect that all the modern conveniences and services will be available when they land to dip their toes in the water and sun themselves on the beach. The Caribbean islands that are described in their tourist brochures as paradises are being treated by the developed country banks as if they are Sodom and Gomorrah thanks to the new financial rules. The financial regulators use pejorative expressions like "tax havens" and impose unfair rules and sanctions on those societies, which may prevent valuable remittances being sent to people back home or prevent the payment of the school fees of Bahamian and CARICOM students abroad. While such destruction is being wrought on those same small countries, they are being asked and lobbied to vote for one cause or another in the interest of the developed countries. But what many of our leaders and peoples are asking is, "Where is the quid pro quo in all of this?"

No CARICOM country, including the Bahamas, is shielding anyone involved in unlawful behaviour. All applicable agreements are adhered to and are complied with in connection with money-laundering and the unlawful evasion of taxes. The attacks on the Bahamas and the CARICOM region are inaccurate and unjust. The recent attacks in the press about the Bahamas financial services sector are simply reprehensible and represent violations of international norms. We reject them. Normally, one does not seek to make a moral case in this forum. But there is a dubious moral equivalence that is being argued by the developed countries. They argue that, even though they have laws regarding the protection of privacy and private property from illegal seizure by the State, even though our countries are independent and free to do as they wish, the fact that our countries serve as bankers for those seeking to take advantage of tax competition is somehow immoral because it robs the developed world of legitimate revenue. But that is simply not true.

The evidence is that the wealth accumulated in offshore sectors goes back to the developed countries and the offshore sectors are therefore of benefit to the developed world. We can present another moral argument. If the societies of the Caribbean collapse because of overregulation by other countries, then the result of the destruction of millions of families would be the greater moral wrong. If one then argues that it is immoral to evade one's responsibility to pay taxes at home — we agree — we argue that you have a moral responsibility to understand that overregulating, changing the goalposts, not creating a level playing field in the financial services sector and de-risking can bring about an immoral result. That problem must be

solved by those who imposed the regulations. It is a moral imperative.

The Bahamas has been pleased to join the United States of America and others in the Safe Ocean Network, a global initiative aimed at all aspects of the fight against illegal fishing, including detection, enforcement and prosecution. On last Wednesday, I had the privilege of depositing our instruments of accession to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. The desire for the safe governance of the oceans has also informed the decision of the Bahamas to seek another term on the Council of the International Maritime Organization, where we have established a reputation for upholding the highest standards of maritime safety, security and environmental protection. I ask for the support of Member States for the re-election of the Bahamas to that Council.

We need a broadening and modernization of the development-financing indicators used to assess development level and development needs. We have stated, and continue to argue, that gross domestic product per capita should not be the primary determinant that determines whether a country qualifies for international economic assistance or concessional access to development financing.

As a demonstration of the importance that the Bahamas attaches to the advancement of women, Ms. Marion Bethel was nominated for a seat on the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and was elected in May. We believe that Ms. Bethel will contribute to CEDAW's efforts to advance women's empowerment and gender equality. We expect that her experiences on that body will increase knowledge in the Bahamas relative the advancement of women.

A more vexing problem is how to ensure that young males in our society do not fall behind. In all areas of academics, young males struggle to survive and keep up and prepare for participation in our societies. The Government has turned its attention now to remedial measures to ensure that they do not fall further behind. I am proud to say that there are two young males from the Abaco Islands who have joined us as the winners of a student contest that enabled them to win an opportunity to see this event. They are joined by a young female. We are proud to see them here. There is a larger fight for the integration of all young men and women into the formal economy. Young people are the future, and we have to ensure that they understand and see that those processes are included in the general economy.

I am pleased to announce that the Bahamas is seeking election for membership in the Human Rights Council for the term 2019 to 2021. I ask for the support of all Member States for the Bahamas to be elected to that Council.

Each day, our country of 400,000 people faces incursions from Haiti and Cuba by people seeking a better way of life. Those incursions are unsustainable and expensive to police and prevent. That is why we are working with Cuba and Haiti on that sensitive and vexing issue, as well as with the United States, which is the destination of choice. That is also all the more reason why attention must be paid to closer and more normal relations between the United States and Cuba. We will also support the continued call for an end to the economic embargo on Cuba when the vote comes before the United Nations shortly. Our country is really pleased that elections will be held in Haiti next month. The Bahamas has pledged to provide observers to those elections.

We wish to thank the outgoing Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his leadership, vision and tireless efforts. We thank him for his service and wish him well in the future.

We are in the midst of the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent. The CARICOM region and the Bahamas are largely an African diaspora. During the decade, we have seen a man of African descent become the head of the most powerful country in the world. Thousands of Bahamians and people across the Caribbean took pride in that example of success. We wish him well as he leaves office.

There was a picture of a little black boy in the Oval Office of the United States. In the picture, the President is bending down and allowing that boy to touch his hair. The little boy, it seemed, wanted to be sure that someone like him with hair like his was actually the President of the United States. That is the background against which people of African descent encounter negativity all around the world. Thousands of little black boys and girls in the Bahamas have taken the success of the President of the United States as an affirmation of hope.

The wave of shootings by police officers in the United States must not be allowed to damage that image of that country. We think that it is imperative for our closest neighbour, the United States, to understand that in the International Decade for People of African Descent it must do the right thing.

The President of the United States affirmed that he believes in a liberal democracy. We support that position. All of the CARICOM countries, including the Bahamas, are shining examples, without exception, of liberal democracies. They feature ideological pluralism, capitalist economies, multiparty States, regular elections, independent judiciaries with low levels of institutional corruption and regular public consultations on policies. This world body, then, has a stake in ensuring that the societies of the CARICOM region survive. Michael Manley, the late national hero of Jamaica, made that point in this very forum many decades ago.

Three successive Popes — John Paul II, Benedict and Francis — have all decreed that capitalism must operate with a moral conscience. Our countries all operate within that milieu. The Christian values of tolerance and respect for the sanctity of the individual and the rule of law remain firm. The millions of tourists who visit the region can attest to that fact.

I end where I began, on de-risking and the issues of climate change. With so many positive attributes, why does it appear that so much is being done to ignore and undermine the success of our societies, which are shining examples of what the world says that it desires? It is morally perplexing and legally indefensible. We are small, and we have no armies to deploy to impose a result. We cannot force results. To paraphrase an American judge, we have only our voice and with that voice we say today: the moral cry for help is the moral demand for rescue. The United Nations is where we have a level playing field. It is the appropriate forum to make our case. That is so whether the issue is banking, financial services, climate change, sustainable development, financing for development, migration or simply survival.

Scripture tells us: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs". It also says, "Whatever you did for the least of these, you did for me." Therefore, as a representative of "the least of these", we use our moral voice today to say that now, more than ever, we need the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now call upon His Excellency Mr. Osman Mohammed Saleh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea.

Mr. Saleh (Eritrea): This year, the people of Eritrea have been celebrating the silver jubilee of their country's independence in 1991. During the difficult years of the war for independence, very few people believed that Eritreans and their leadership were capable of that historic achievement, as the odds were overwhelmingly stacked against them.

Unlike in other liberation struggles, it was both super-Powers — the United States and the Soviet Union, and not just one or the other — that sought to crush by armed force Eritrea's aspirations for self-determination. Nevertheless, the Eritrean people and their liberation movement — the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, the predecessor of today's People's Front for Democracy and Justice — believed in the justness of their cause and in their own determination and capability to win the war fair and square and prevail in the unequal battle.

The post-independence struggle to build a nation has also been complex and difficult. We have been compelled to commit precious human and economic resources to defend ourselves against wars of aggression and subversion. We have suffered the occupation of our sovereign territory in violation of international law and a binding international arbitration ruling. We have been subjected to incessant hostility, sanctions, economic, financial and diplomatic pressures, as well as armed attacks and psychological warfare.

Our people, particularly our youth, were targeted through policies that actively encouraged their migration, leading to much suffering and loss of life at the hands of human traffickers. The inevitable outcome of those policies was then presented as evidence against Eritrea. No less an authority than President Obama of the United States stated publicly that he had "renewed sanctions on some of the worst abusers, including... Eritrea". And he added, "We are partnering with groups that help women and children escape from the grip of their abusers". The objective was regime change, as a prelude to bringing Eritrea to its knees.

In the face of that concerted onslaught, few gave Eritrea a fighting chance. We were routinely written off, and our imminent collapse was predicted with regularity. However, once again, resilient Eritrea and Eritreans at home and abroad were able to forge the

capability to resist the onslaught on their nation and protect their hard-won freedom through their patriotism, cohesion, sheer determination and sacrifices. After a difficult decade and a half, Eritrea is now on the rise.

The majority of the Millennium Development Goals have been achieved. The economy is rebounding. Infrastructure is being built. Favourable conditions are being created to provide youth with ample opportunities for quality education, vocational skills, decent living conditions and active political participation. The country's regional and international engagement is growing. The counter-productive policy of isolating Eritrea is slowly but surely failing. The pressures, coercion and hostility that Eritrea has faced are by no means exceptional or distinctive. In our region, the Horn of Africa, they are but one element of a misguided policy pursued for over a quarter of a century that has fuelled violence, conflict, instability and fragmentation, as well as extremism and terrorism.

Throughout the world there are many nations that cherish dignity and independent decision-making, that uphold the sovereign equality of nations, that seek to chart political and economic paths suited to their conditions, and that seek to benefit from their human and natural resources. They have faced the wrath of those who wish to cling to their domination and privileges, and resort to all manner of coercion and subversion, including sanctions, blockades and armed interventions. Unsustainable policies of greed and pillage and the reckless resort to unilateral pressure and force in order to secure unilateral advantage, instead of seeking common ground and mutual interests, are leading the world down an extremely dangerous path. The very survival of the planet and humankind is in grave danger owing to unsustainable systems of production and consumption and the attendant large-scale wastage. In that context, Eritrea wishes to point out that the pending decision by the United States to adopt legislation that nullifies national sovereign immunity constitutes a violation of international law and a dangerous precedent with grave implications. Although the challenges and dangers we face are grave and stark, our world is still full of possibilities and opportunities.

The global balance of power and wealth is changing. It features new sources of growth, dynamism and innovation — not only in the celebrated emerging economies, but also in many other countries. In both industrialized and developing nations, ordinary people are making their voices heard and their actions felt by mobilizing, organizing and fighting against domination by a privileged few. They are fighting for a more equal and just world. Calls for the respect of international law and norms and for the overhaul and revitalization of the United Nations and global financial institutions — with a view of making them more representative and democratic — are widespread, insistent and often backed by concrete initiatives and concerted actions.

In our region, the Horn of Africa, the past two decades have generally been a period of missed opportunities, zero-sum games and repeated conflicts and setbacks. Even today, the situation remains fraught with risk and danger. Yet, recent developments indicate the possibility of a new beginning and a relaunching of the 1990s vision of a peaceful, progressive, economically dynamic and cooperative Horn of Africa.

Eritrea has often spoken of the hostilities and injustices that it has suffered, the difficulties it has faced and the valiant struggles of its people. That is an experience that it shares with many other peoples and nations. That experience informs our country's views and policies. Yet, Eritrea does not dwell on the past. Rather, it prefers to look to the future. It is keen on building on its encouraging achievements, so as to transform its economy and society and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by relying mainly on the energy, skills and initiative of its people and the judicious use of its natural resources.

It is also determined to work actively, constructively and in collaboration with its neighbours for peace, stability and prosperity in the Horn of Africa and Red Sea regions. It seeks to foster relations of solidarity and mutual support with all nations, peoples and organizations that fight for a world free from the scourges of war and poverty and for the respect of human dignity. To conclude, Eritrea is resolved to engage with all nations in modesty and self-confidence.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Wilfred Elrington, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Belize.

Mr. Elrington (Belize): Allow me at the outset to congratulate the President of the General Assembly on his election to preside over the seventy-first session of the Assembly. I wish to assure him of Belize's fullest support.

Thirty-five years ago, Belize became a State Member of the United Nations. Membership confirmed our independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and our place among equals in the community of nations. Regrettably, however, membership has not been able to resolve the territorial claim laid on our country some 80 years ago by Guatemala.

Our track record since our independence confirms that Belize holds sacrosanct the dignity of human beings, the principles of justice, equality, inclusivity and the rule of law. Belizeans are inherently altruistic and compassionate. In the nascent years of our independence, when civil war ravaged our Central American region, Belize was the beacon of hope and sanctuary of choice for thousands of refugees, including Guatemalans, desperately seeking to escape the scourges of war, poverty and oppression. Belize welcomed thousands of refugees, amounting to well in excess of 30 per cent of our population at the time. Indeed, even to this day, the flow of migrants into our country continues unabated. Belize is a nation of migrants living in unity, peace and harmony.

Our diversity, national identity and pride have long been a source of strength for our people. We have never cowered in the face of the repeated threats to our security by our neighbour, Guatemala. We remain steadfast in our resolve to protect and preserve our sovereignty and territorial integrity. Though many perils lurk along our forested borders and in our maritime and riverine territories, we have been protecting and patrolling our borders with determination, so as to ensure the safety and security of our beloved homeland. At the same time, our untiring diplomats have striven mightily to resolve the long-standing territorial dispute, which is our paramount foreign-policy concern, by using all the diplomatic channels and means at their disposal.

Regrettably, though not unpredictably, there have been hostile incidents between the civilian and military personnel of both Belize and Guatemala on our southern border on the Sarstoon River. Guatemalan naval personnel have repeatedly impeded the peaceful ingress and egress of civilian and military Belizeans on the river, wrongfully claiming that the river is theirs. However, as the northern side of the river is clearly Belizean territory, the unimpeded use and enjoyment of that side of the river is the right of every Belizean citizen. Belize has therefore promptly and properly protested each attempt to impede our citizens from using the river. Additionally, we have engaged our Guatemalan counterparts in dialogue under the good offices of the Secretary General of the Organization of American States with a view of putting a speedy end to that potentially perilous practice.

At the same time, the situation along our western border has also been vexing. Continuous illegal entry by armed trespassers from Guatemala have persisted despite the valiant efforts of our border patrol to deter them. The trespassers engage with impunity, day and night, in gold panning, hunting for wild game and birds, pillaging Mayan temples, logging illegally and cultivating crops, including marijuana, for commercial purpose. In the process, our priceless forest is being decimated, our potable and sea waters are being compromised, and our coral reefs are being choked to death by sediments that run off the denuded mountainsides after each torrential downpour.

Fully cognizant of the devastating environmental impact that such practices are having in neighbouring countries and further afield, Belize cannot afford to let the same thing happen to us. From time to time, in the course of attempting to apprehend the trespassers, firearms have been used by Belize security personnel and by the trespassers, who are invariably armed. Indeed, between September 2014 and March 2016, a Belizean Tourism Police officer was killed and a Belize Defence Force sergeant was ambushed and shot, though not fatally, by trespassers entering Belize from Guatemala.

Tragically, and much to Belize's regret, on 20 April 2016 a Guatemalan minor was fatally shot and his father and brother injured when they came in contact with a Belizean patrol in one of our protected national parks in the dead of night. The Belize Police forthwith began an investigation. Moreover, officials of the Organization of American States (OAS), stationed in the Adjacency Zone between Belize and Guatemala, immediately commenced their own investigation. And, at the specific behest of Guatemala, Belize requested the Secretary General of the Organization of American States to launch an official special independent investigation into the incident. The Organization of American States commissioned two senior eminently qualified specialists to undertake that special investigation, with the full knowledge and approval of the Guatemalan Government. At the time of their appointment, Guatemala expressed no reservations as to their competence, suitability or otherwise, to undertake that investigation. Last August, the Special

Commission delivered its findings to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States.

The report discloses that the deceased had been detained by security personnel in Belize a mere month prior to the incident. At the time of his detention, he was illegally carrying a .22-calibre rifle and was in illegal possession of wild game. He was neither mistreated, arrested nor prosecuted by the Belizean authorities. Instead, he was promptly sent back safely to his country. The report further discloses that the deceased, his brother, also a minor, and their father were knowingly and unlawfully well within Belizean territory on the night of the incident, and that none of the wounds inflicted was caused by weapons carried by personnel of the Belize Defence Force. The wounds were inflicted by small-calibre firearms carried on the night of the incident by two members of a local conservation-oriented non-governmental organization that was part of the Belize patrol. Shots were fired by both groups, the Guatemalans and the Belizean joint patrol, on that ill-fated night. And, the following morning, elements of the Guatemalan Army, along with civilians from a nearby Guatemalan village, entered Belizean territory illegally, visited the site, contaminated the scene and withdrew and withheld evidentiary material that could have been useful to the investigation.

In the wake of the incident, Guatemala launched a fanatical public-relations campaign against Belize, falsely alleging that the Belize Defence Force was responsible for the death of the minor. In addition, the Guatemalan President publicly announced the massing of troops along our western and southern borders.

However, the report of the Special Independent Commission chronicles what really took place on the night of the incident. The objective, impartial findings of fact established the correctness of Belize's position from the start, and the wholly erroneous nature of the allegations levelled against our country by Guatemala. The report completely absolves Belize of any and all blame for the incident. It makes manifest the wrongness of Guatemala's accusation against Belize and against the personnel of our Belize Defence Force. Guatemala has since then publicly rejected the Commission's report. However, it is certainly irresponsible, if not reprehensible and utterly unacceptable, that Guatemala should now seek to reject the results of a process that it had specifically requested and agreed to and which was conducted by OAS-appointed independent third-country professionals with impeccable credentials and with no axe to grind. Moreover, the wanton threat of the use of force by a nation against its neighbour is wholly uncalled for, recklessly dangerous and in clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations and can in no way be countenanced.

Belize's only wish is to live in peace and harmony with all its neighbours, including Guatemala. We fully appreciate that with each passing day, with more and more Guatemalans trespassing into our country, despoiling our natural resources and engaging in illegal and destructive activities, the potential for violent incidents and conflicts has become increasingly probable and problematic. That situation makes a prompt and peaceful end to the anachronistic and unfounded territorial claim on our country an urgent imperative.

Belize acknowledges the centrality of the United Nations in the multilateral order and as a uniting force for championing the common good. Its leadership likewise remains central to international peace and security, to development and to the rule of law. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is truly a historical milestone for the entire world. The essence of sustainable development is entrenched in the Belize Constitution. Our economic development has fully embraced the indivisibility of social and environmental policies. From the early 1990s, Belize began to put in place development plans for its fledgling industries that are consistent with a progressive legal regime for environmental protection.

Complementary to those economic and environmental developments, Belize is incrementally providing free public education at the primary and secondary levels. It has established a Maya Land Rights Commission so as to implement measures for the identification and protection of rights arising from Mayan customary land tenure. It is rolling out a national health-insurance policy, and work is in progress to advance national efforts towards gender equality and equity.

The national debate on social issues recently took a turn that could set a precedent. A High Court ruling held that Section 53 of our Criminal Code, which criminalizes consensual sexual acts between same-sex partners, is unconstitutional. The ruling also expands the definition of "sex" to include sexual orientation. However, in response to the request of a not inconsiderable segment of our population, our

Government has launched a limited appeal against the judgment, challenging only the expanded definition of "sex" by the High Court.

In April, Belize was among the first countries to sign and ratify the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We also commend the United States of America and China for their leadership for doing so as well. Belize fully supports efforts, under the auspices of the United Nations, to design a new international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, and welcomes the decision to convene a high-level United Nations conference to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 in June 2017.

In that spirit of inclusiveness, Belize urges that the Republic of China on Taiwan be accorded meaningful participation in the work of the United Nations. The Taiwanese Government has been working assiduously to promote international cooperation and development, in line with the spirit and principles of the Millennium Development Goals. It has also fully embraced the Sustainable Development Goals. We urge the international community to welcome Taiwan's meaningful participation in the mechanisms, meetings and activities of the United Nations specialized agencies, including the World Health Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Setbacks in the global economy and externalities resulting from institutional policies, both public and private, to safeguard against financial and other security risks, as well as the adverse impacts of climate change, have all conspired against Belize's sustainable development trajectory. Today, we are rebuilding our country in the aftermath of Hurricane Earl, which in less than eight hours resulted in the loss of some 5.5 per cent of our gross domestic product.

Belize fully endorses the views and sentiments that all other delegations have expressed in their pleas for urgent relief from the deleterious consequences of the decisions by global banks to withdraw correspondent banking relationships from our financial institutions.

Belize celebrated its thirty-fifth anniversary of independence on the same day as the International Day of Peace. Peace and stability in our hemisphere are critical to the development and well-being of the peoples of the Americas. For that reason, Belize remains concerned about the status of the controversy between Guyana and Venezuela. We urge the Secretary-General to urgently exercise his authority under the 1966 Agreement to resolve the controversy over the frontier between Venezuela and British Guiana in order to arrive at a choice of options that would definitively settle the border controversy.

Belize strictly adheres to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States. In that regard, we stand in solidarity with the Government and the people of Venezuela in their efforts to resolve their domestic issues in accordance with their laws and Constitution. We also remain very concerned about the unabated cholera epidemic in Haiti, and urge the United Nations to take all necessary steps to help the Haitian people end that terrible scourge, occasioned by agents of the United Nations. Belize welcomes the tremendous progress already made in the peace process in Colombia, which we fully support. We look forward to an early and successful implementation of the agreement. We also commend the progress made in the bilateral relations between Cuba and the United States. Belize reiterates its call for an early end to the economic embargo against Cuba.

We join others in calling for an early end to the tragic conflicts in Syria and Libya, which are an affront to humanity. We adhere fully to the right of peoples to self-determination, and reiterate our solidarity with the struggle for liberation and independence of our Sahrawi brothers and sisters. Belize remains disheartened, although not discouraged, by the intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We believe that the only just solution to that conflict is one that results in two sovereign and independent States, living side by side in peace and security within secure and recognized borders.

We stand in solidarity with South Korea in the face of North Korea's irresponsible experiments with nuclear and missile programmes, including the conduct of nuclear tests, in violation of Security Council resolutions. We join the international community in condemning those actions, which pose a clear and present danger not only to South Korea, but to the entire world.

While we are heartened by the indefatigable efforts of the United Nations and other philanthropic organizations and individuals to alleviate the suffering of migrants and other displaced persons worldwide, it is evident that much more needs to be done. We in Belize

pledge to do all in our power and within our means to discharge our obligations to all suffering persons who seek our succour.

In a country as small as Belize, in a world as big as ours, we are all citizens of planet Earth, big or small. The policies that we devise at any level must be reflective of that reality. It is up to us leaders, working together and shouldering our respective sovereign responsibilities, to ensure that every nation, large and small, and every individual, man, woman or child, shall have a say in our noble endeavours to achieve a more just, equitable and secure world. Our task is clear. Its attainment is not impossible, but neither is it without difficulty. Let us get it done. Belize stands ready to do its part.

In conclusion, as Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is beginning to prepare to leave office at the end of 10 sterling years of service to the United Nations and to the world as a whole, Belize takes this opportunity to thank him and to wish him every success in his post-Secretary-General life. We also take this opportunity to thank the United States President, Barack Obama, as he too prepares to leave office later this year. We wish him every success in his post-presidential life.

The Acting President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Niermala Badrising, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Suriname.

Ms. Badrising (Suriname): On behalf of His Excellency Mr. Desiré Delano Bouterse, President of the Republic of Suriname, I extend to the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Thomson, congratulations on his election to preside over the General Assembly at its seventy-first session. His wealth of experience will undoubtedly contribute to the successful discharge of his important duties.

I would like to pay tribute to outgoing Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his accomplishments in leading the Organization over the past 10 years and for his continuous endeavours to reorganize the United Nations. We especially applaud his efforts to promote sustainable development and his commitment to the betterment of the livelihood of vulnerable groups and to the advancement of women. The Government and the people of the Republic of Suriname wish the Secretary-General much success in his future, new challenges.

As we continue our deliberations and take decisions on pertinent issues with respect to the global agenda, the world is facing grave financial, economic, environmental and political crises. That situation is in contrast to what is needed for the sustainable development of all nations, namely, peace, political stability, democracy and universal access to our planet's resources.

At the same time, we are concerned by the multitude of challenges and threats that the world now faces in the political, security, economic and social realms. They include the global recession and economic slowdown, which have caused decreasing growth and productivity; worsening inequalities that are causing increased violence, political instability and social deterioration; transnational organized crime and terrorism; and digital and technological innovation.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development places human beings at the centre of development. The implementation of the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals gives us the opportunity to fight for a just world order in order to achieve peace, equitable power relations in the world, and political and social stability, as well as an equal distribution of wealth and opportunities for all. That would imply that eventually the eradication of poverty and the promotion of economic growth could be attained.

Nevertheless, there is a wide gap between what we promise our peoples in international and regional forums and what is actually achieved. Suriname believes that we must build peaceful and inclusive societies with equal opportunities for all. It is therefore essential that our social and economic order be structurally reformed and that we focus on advancing innovation and new technologies, human knowledge, capacities and skills. That is needed in order ultimately to find a solution that will create opportunities to accumulate knowledge, increase employment and social protection, enhance social inclusion and protect the environment, all of which will eventually lead to sustainable growth and stability.

It is not by chance that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also deals with migration, nor is it a coincidence that we have been discussing migration as a top priority of the international community. The movement of people across international borders — be it as migrants, refugees or asylum-seekers — continues to be one of the most important issues on the global policy agenda, for it has enormous economic, social and cultural implications. As far as refugees and asylum-seekers are concerned, Suriname holds the view that

international norms, values and principles must be upheld and that human rights must be respected.

Suriname attaches great importance to the principles of international law, under which we have committed both to refrain from unilateral interference in the domestic affairs of other countries and to respect their national sovereignty and territorial integrity. That is also essential for securing peace, international security and lasting prosperity for all nations, regions and peoples. We believe that the only way to create a culture of peace and justice is through dialogue, consensus-building and negotiated resolutions to conflicts. Long-lasting political stability requires that democracy and democratic principles be respected; democratic traditions must be upheld, and the legitimacy of democratically elected Governments must be recognized for the duration of their tenure.

A long-standing issue on our international agenda is the struggle of the Palestinian people. Suriname supports the two-State solution for both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples in order to attain the political stability needed for their development. In our region of the world, South America, we welcome the historic peace agreement that is to be signed today between the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia. It upholds the principles of coexistence, cooperation and respect, and reinforces our hemisphere as a zone of peace, as declared in 2014 during the third Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. We also welcome the ongoing process to restore diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States of America, which will contribute to further enhancing peace, stability, unity and development in the Americas. We will continue to support the call by the international community to have the United States lift the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

Global temperatures and sea levels are rising, ice caps are melting, and greenhouse-gas emissions are not yet diminishing. With a forest cover of well over 90 per cent and a deforestation rate of merely 0.02 per cent, Suriname is one of the few carbon-negative countries in the world. Its relatively small size and population — a surface area of 163,000 square kilometres and a population of 550,000 — make it particularly vulnerable to global environmental challenges and external economic shocks. In addition, as a country with a low-lying coastal zone and with the majority of its population and fertile soils at risk from the dangers of rising sea levels, Suriname's sustainable development efforts are under serious threat.

Nevertheless, we are still prepared to contribute to reducing greenhouse gases and to implementing even more ambitious policies. However, we cannot do that on our own, and we therefore call upon the international community not only to develop technical and financial support mechanisms within existing financial frameworks, but also to make new and additional financing available in order to support developing countries like ours. That will allow us to implement essential adaptation policies and programmes, compensate for losses and damages, develop technology and safeguard food production and food security.

The consequences of the global economic slowdown are being felt throughout the world, and Suriname has not been spared. Faced with a drop in the international prices of the commodities that we export, last year we were forced to implement an adjustment and reform programme that has imposed difficult but necessary adjustment measures. In order to ensure that the adjustment runs smoothly and to secure technical assistance for our reform programme, the Government of Suriname signed a stand-by arrangement with the International Monetary Fund early in 2016. In the light of the positive results achieved in a short period of time, we reiterate our intention to continue to work in close collaboration with the Fund, with the goal of securing macroeconomic stability and carrying out the institutional and legal reforms needed to restore economic growth and social stability.

We are confident that with international commodity prices on a steady path of recovery and with the grants and soft loans that we have been able to acquire through our friendly bilateral relationships and multilateral partners, as well as through international financial institutions such as the Caribbean Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank, my country's development path will be back on track within the next two years.

We therefore thank all of those who have offered their assistance in recent years, and we also welcome foreign investors who wish to participate in our future development. Suriname is a country with many natural resources and excellent opportunities for outsourced production processes. We recognize that we will have to exploit our resources commercially if we are to sustain our economic growth, and diversify our economy,

which will include a shift from complete dependence on minerals and developing new sectors, such as agro-industry and tourism.

In order to achieve sustainable development, world peace and stability for our nations and peoples, joint and consensual endeavours are required, as well as greater cooperation and dialogue. The relevance of multilateralism has proved to be essential for our coordinated actions. Suriname recognizes the eminent role that the United Nations plays in ensuring lasting development and peace, and we pledge our unwavering commitment to the work of the Organization.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Denis Moses, Minister for Foreign and CARICOM Affairs of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Moses (Trinidad and Tobago): I am honoured to have been given once again the opportunity to address the Assembly, which is composed of States that are tasked with charting the way forward on a range of issues that impact our collective development and well-being.

Allow me first to extend congratulations to the President of the General Assembly, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, on his election to lead the Assembly at its seventy-first session. His election comes almost one year after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which the international community committed to changing its approach to development to one that is people-centred, planet-focused, grounded in the principle of sustainability, and which endorses a balanced approach across the economic, political and social aspects of development. The election of a representative of a small island developing State to the presidency of this body is symbolic of the imperative for universal action and the contribution that must be made by all Members, regardless of size, economy, religion or demography, so as to ensure a trajectory of sustainable growth and development for humankind and life on earth.

Allow me to also express our gratitude to his predecessor, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft of Denmark, who as President of the Assembly at its seventieth session further advanced the Office's high standard of transparency and accountability. Under his stewardship, notable progress was made towards the revitalization of the General Assembly, and its members fully identified the priorities for which action is deemed imperative to ensuring our common journey to 2030.

The scope of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) covers the multitudinous threats to our collective well-being and the longevity of our civilization. From the existential hazard caused by unmitigated climate change to the insidious threats of violence, extremism and terrorism, to the crises of forced displacement and the spread of infectious diseases and illnesses, such as Ebola, chikungunya and zika, it is clear that the challenges of our time far exceed the limits of geography and demography and therefore diminish the efficacy of unilateral responses. However, as grave as the threats we collectively face, what is even more compelling is the opportunity presented to our United Nations to chart the course of meaningful and universal growth and prosperity by deepening our partnership and cooperation. Such an approach will allow for a reversal of the current patterns of inequality and insecurity and transform our collective circumstances into those that will redound to the benefit of all humanity.

The pathway to that transformation lies in the creation of meaningful and innovative partnerships to facilitate the full and universal implementation of the SDGs. The leadership imperative of our time requires that we strike an appropriate balance between national interest and the global good and, accordingly, that we adopt a deeply cooperative and constructive approach to carving out a future of prosperity for our and succeeding generations. I am therefore grateful for the opportunity to address the Assembly yet again and, in this general debate on the aptly selected theme, "The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world", to share the perspectives of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, a small island developing State, as a responsible and committed partner in the multilateral pursuit of a sustainable future.

A little more than a year ago in this very Hall, Trinidad and Tobago joined other members in adopting the ambitious and inclusive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and thereby heralded a new phase of enhanced multilateralism in pursuit of a common goal. This groundbreaking Agenda, bolstered by a renewed spirit of global solidarity, compels each of us to join together in international cooperation and partnership to profoundly improve the lives of our fellow humans without discrimination or prejudice.

Having adopted the Agenda, we are all now tasked with determining the best way forward for its operationalization and implementation, according to our respective domestic circumstances. As evidence of its unreserved commitment to the achievement of the overarching objective of the 2030 Agenda and the full implementation of the SDGs, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is placing the principles enshrined in the Agenda at the nucleus of its National Development Plan for Trinidad and Tobago, Vision 2030. Our Vision 2030 national plan, currently in the final stages of elaboration, aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals. Trinidad and Tobago recognizes that the 2030 Agenda is a transformative plan of action for people, the planet and prosperity through peace and partnership. Accordingly, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to its full implementation through the mainstreaming of the principles of sustainability throughout its policy spectrum.

The thrust of the 2030 Agenda for global transformation, with no one left behind, calls for action to enhance the quality of life of all segments of society, including the systematically marginalized groups. Among them are women, girls and the differently abled, who have historically been denied the equitable access to opportunity and mobility that would have ensured their participation in society as equal partners with men and enhanced not only their own quality of life and happiness, but also that of their families, communities and society as a whole. It is deeply regrettable that women and girls and the differently abled continue to be denied fundamental human rights and freedoms in many parts of the world. Women do not receive equal pay for equal work, and they are systematically prevented from obtaining an education and reaching their full potential as human beings and as citizens.

Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to raising the standard of living and welfare of all members of the national community, the enhancement of the educational system, improving the delivery of health care and providing a higher level of accessibility and support to persons with disabilities. That commitment has been a long-standing position of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, which has enacted several laws, policies and other measures to promote and strengthen the role of women and girls in society and their overall contribution to national development.

One of the defining challenges of our time is that of addressing the issue of climate change and global temperature increase. Notwithstanding the minuscule contribution to absolute global carbon emissions of small island developing States such as Trinidad and Tobago, unmitigated climate change represents an existential threat for us. The future viability and existence of our island State is dependent on the urgency and ambitiousness of the global response to reversing the already unsustainable trend of the global temperature increase. Consequently, Trinidad and Tobago joins the international community in endorsing the Paris Agreement on Climate Change as a sign of hope for the future. We especially wish to emphasize that the Agreement prioritizes the need for global action on the critical issue of climate change, an approach which, for us, is absolutely imperative if we are to have a chance of averting its most dangerous effects.

The adoption of the Paris Agreement signalled to the world that, in the words of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, "the spirit of multilateralism is strong". That spirit must continue to see us through to early entry into force and implementation of the Agreement. In keeping with that sentiment, Trinidad and Tobago joined 174 other Member States in becoming a signatory of the Paris Agreement in April. Trinidad and Tobago recognizes that the conversation surrounding the Paris Agreement is now focused on building momentum towards its early entry into force. To that end, the Trinidad and Tobago Government is actively addressing the issue of ratification.

Trinidad and Tobago also looks forward to deliberations at the upcoming twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Marrakech, Morocco, and to working towards the full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and supporting international cooperation on the mitigation, adaptation and compliance on a scale that will ensure that the increase in the average global temperature is limited to 1.5°C.

Although the economy of Trinidad and Tobago is largely dependent on the hydrocarbon and petrochemical industries, we are committed to the processes under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Accordingly, the Government has instituted incentives to encourage investment and job creation in renewable and clean technologies in the transportation and industrial sectors. The Government has aggressively pursued a national economic diversification strategy, a strategy which will also strengthen Trinidad and

Tobago's resilience to exogenous shocks in global markets. Trinidad and Tobago continues to explore innovative measures to bolster its economic stability and its capacity to remain properly integrated in the global financial and trade architecture.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that national development efforts need to be supported by an enabling international economic environment through international business activities and finance, international development cooperation and international trade. However, the issue of financial institutions terminating or restricting correspondent banking relations in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) region has destabilized the financial sectors of our member States and has disrupted the region's growth and economic progress. The cessation of correspondent banking relations by international banks, despite CARICOM compliance with the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Global Forum on Taxation, undermines our efforts to truly build a global partnership that will achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago therefore joins its partners in the Caribbean community in calling for international banks to engage in collaboration with affected member States to restore normal financial relationships between domestic banks and international markets.

The 2030 Agenda also recognizes that sustainable development can be realized only in a peaceful, secure and stable environment free of war and conflict. Transnational organized crime and violence, piracy, trafficking in persons, cybercrime and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons pose a daunting challenge to the security of all States, but especially small island developing States (SIDS). It is the experience of Trinidad and Tobago, as a small island developing State, and of the Caribbean Community as a whole, that those challenges undermine our efforts to achieve sustainable development, threatening the livelihoods of our people and the rule of law. Such threats can have the potential to affect regional and international peace and security.

Consequently, at the international level, Trinidad and Tobago, together with CARICOM, fully subscribes to the Arms Trade Treaty, with the aim of preventing armed violence in the region and freeing many from the deadly tyranny associated with a prevalence of unregulated small arms and light weapons. Since 2010, Trinidad and Tobago has also introduced and sponsored General Assembly resolution 68/33, on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, encouraging women's participation in all disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control decision-making processes at the local, regional and national levels.

Ensuring the security, health and social development of our people continues to be a major priority for Trinidad and Tobago. Like many others, our country has not escaped the effects of the illicit drug trade and its associated ills. We have come to realize that in the context of sustainable development, our people's continued development cannot be divorced from the proliferation of that illicit trade and its concomitant problems. It is widely acknowledged that the world drug problem and the illicit drug economy have the ability to destabilize vulnerable States in many different ways. In order to deal with the problem, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is using its national development agenda to launch initiatives to mitigate the socioeconomic conditions that are both the cause and result of the problems related to drug use and trafficking. The initiatives are fully aligned with our overall policy direction and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It seems fitting that I am addressing the Assembly on 26 September, the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Trinidad and Tobago would like to stress that using the nuclear option would have severe humanitarian and other devastating consequences for the peoples of the world. We therefore reiterate our call for denuclearizing every region of the world, and we are proud to belong to the region that enshrined the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone under the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Trinidad and Tobago believes firmly that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations. We lament the fact that, 46 years after the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the international community is still unable to undertake good-faith negotiations on nuclear disarmament. Mutually assured destruction, which is inevitable with the use of nuclear weapons, cannot be a way of settling disputes when both the combatants and several hundred millions of people outside the theatre of war would assuredly

perish. Trinidad and Tobago therefore continues to firmly support the call for taking effective measures on nuclear disarmament, including commencing negotiations on an international instrument for prohibiting and eliminating nuclear weapons.

Trinidad and Tobago is deeply concerned about the growing number of violent extremist acts across the world and the threat that they pose to our shared values of democracy, peace, tolerance and respect for human dignity. While it is important to deal with violent extremism from a security perspective, we should not overlook or dismiss the correlation between violent extremism and development. We remain concerned about the global trend whereby young people fall victim to recruitment by extremist groups, through both online recruitment and other forms of proselytization. To address the problem, we share the view that in order to be as effective as possible, counter-terrorism strategies should include the creation of enabling environments that support the empowerment of young people. That inclusive approach can help to involve them in advocating for the goals of our collective aspirations, thereby reducing the allure of extremist groups.

Trinidad and Tobago is committed to building an effective global framework for a strategic collective security architecture that addresses the negative social, economic and psychological conditions that give rise to violent extremism, including poverty, violations of human rights and weak governance. That framework must also be supported by a robust international legal system that enables everyone to live freely and in dignity, without fear of persecution, and that affords everyone equal protection before the law, in word and in fact. A robust framework of international law can protect all individuals from acts of violence, war crimes, crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity.

As a country that was in the vanguard of the efforts to establish the International Criminal Court (ICC), through the pioneering work of the late Arthur Robinson, former Prime Minister and President of Trinidad and Tobago, Trinidad and Tobago remains resolute in its commitment to supporting the mandate of the ICC and its primary objective — helping to put an end to impunity for perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community and helping to prevent such heinous crimes. Trinidad and Tobago recognizes the importance and legitimacy of the ICC in promoting the rule of law, encouraging respect for human rights and achieving sustainable peace and the further development of nations, in accordance with international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. For those reasons, we urge those countries that have not yet submitted to the jurisdiction of the Court to do so sooner rather than later, so that it can appropriately and completely fulfil its mandate as a universal court.

Trinidad and Tobago is located in a region that is highly vulnerable to the current unprecedented rate of loss of marine biodiversity and the impact of unsustainable practices on the marine environment, particularly in relation to activities conducted in marine ecosystems beyond areas of national jurisdiction. As such, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago looks forward to the adoption, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), of an international legally binding instrument on the issue of conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. We are of the view that a new implementing agreement under UNCLOS should lay a foundation for achieving sustainable development and the protection and sustainable management of the common heritage of humankind for the benefit of present and future generations.

On the occasion of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda last year (see A/70/PV.4), Trinidad and Tobago stated that one of the cornerstones of the integrated sustainable development agenda is the development of a multilateral system strategically poised to facilitate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through multi-stakeholder partnerships. Partnerships undertaken by Governments, international organizations, civil society, the private sector and others provide a vehicle for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, financial resources and technology in order to support the efforts of developing countries to realize sustainable development.

However, middle-income developing countries continue to grapple with a situation that renders them ineligible for international development assistance by virtue of their status, while also coping with the vulnerabilities of being a small island developing State. That is indeed a problem when we consider that our country's middle-income status, based solely on per capita income, denies Trinidad and Tobago access to international development assistance that could bolster our efforts to accelerate our sustainable and social development. That is the common experience of the Caribbean Community, and indeed of the

majority of SIDS. We firmly believe that the United Nations development system should be driven by a multidimensional approach to development assistance that is better tailored to national priorities and specific needs.

If the States Members of the United Nations firmly believe that there can be no sustainable development without peace — and if we all have intentions to keep our promise that no one will be left behind — then the international community must find a solution to the protracted conflicts, tensions and humanitarian crises occurring across the world.

Trinidad and Tobago continues to be deeply concerned about the lack of credible progress in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Recognizing the rights of the Palestinian people as well as those of Israel, our Government has consistently expressed its support for a negotiated settlement involving a two-State solution.

Trinidad and Tobago is also concerned about the ongoing border dispute between Guyana and Venezuela. Given that the two countries have historically maintained a friendly and cooperative relationship, we believe that they should both engage constructively in working towards a peaceful settlement, in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

The international community is pleased that the normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba is making progress. The memory of the first historical visit by a sitting United States President to Havana since the 1959 Cuban revolution will remain in the minds of the people of Cuba and the world for generations, and Trinidad and Tobago continues to be optimistic that the growing relationship between both countries will continue in good faith, and that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba, which significantly challenges its ability to achieve sustainable development, will be lifted soon.

Since the adoption of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), not much has been done to move the process of reforming the Security Council forward. Trinidad and Tobago remains concerned about the fact that the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform have seen little progress since 2008. We therefore urge all Member States to work collaboratively, in the spirit of compromise and for the benefit of all States, to achieve reform of the Security Council so as to enable it to better address current realities, thereby improving the functioning and effectiveness of the United Nations.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Trinidad and Tobago, I wish to express our deepest appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, whose term as the eighth Secretary-General comes to a close at the end of this year. Mr. Ban has initiated many sweeping changes and reforms at the Secretariat designed to make the Organization an ever more dynamic body capable of responding to the emerging needs and challenges facing its diverse membership. At a time of escalating international terrorism and the increasingly urgent need for decisive action on climate change, as well as of criticisms of the efficacy of the United Nations and its peacekeeping operations, his outstanding efforts and leadership have been instrumental in shaping the future of multilateralism. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement are just two examples of an exceptional record of achievements, not to mention his groundbreaking initiative earlier this year to convene the first ever World Humanitarian Summit, in collaboration with the Government of Turkey, in the beautiful city of Istanbul.

Mr. Rahming (Bahamas), Vice-President, took the Chair.

As the United Nations continues its search for a successor, Trinidad and Tobago is of the view that the next Secretary-General must be held to the highest possible standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, with proven leadership and diplomatic skills. It is the responsibility of the next Secretary-General to help realize the extraordinary expectations embodied in the Sustainable Development Goals, to address the burgeoning challenges of the forced migration of refugees and violent extremism, and to transform the United Nations into a global institution that is effective, relevant and fit for purpose.

The universal push to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and transform our world is the responsibility of every State Member of the United Nations. In that regard, Trinidad and Tobago reaffirms its commitment to the Charter and its principles. We will continue to work closely with our family of nations in the pursuit of international peace and security, human rights and sustainable development for every single human being. While we may look different, speak different languages and face different challenges,

humankind shares a common beginning and a common future. In the words of former Secretary-General Kofi Annan,

> "beneath the surface of States and nations, ideas and language, lies the fate of individual human beings in need. Answering their needs will be the mission of the United Nations in the century to come".

Together, let our answer resonate for generations.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Augustine Philip Mahiga, Minister for Foreign Affairs, East Africa, Regional and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): First and foremost, I would like to convey to the Assembly greetings from Mr. John Pombe Joseph Magufuli, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, who, owing to pressing engagements at home, including dealing with the aftermath of the recent devastating earthquake in north-western Tanzania, could not attend today's meeting. He reaffirms Tanzania's commitment to the United Nations and its ideals, and wishes the Assembly success in its deliberations.

On behalf of the people and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, I would like to congratulate the President on his election to lead the General Assembly at its seventy-first session. My delegation wishes him and his team a successful tenure as they preside over our collective global agenda. Tanzania pledges its support and cooperation to him in discharging his duties and responsibilities. We would also like to commend his predecessor, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the Assembly at its seventieth session, for his tireless efforts in sustaining momentum for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

I would like to assure the Assembly of Tanzania's continued support to our shared commitment to addressing the myriad challenges facing the world, including, but not limited to, poverty, injustice, climate change and violent extremism. The United Republic of Tanzania is counting on the leadership of the President in mobilizing the world to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Now that the framework for the global indicators is in place, the onus is on us to ensure effective implementation of the Agenda. We welcome the theme that the Member States adopted for this session of the Assembly — "The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world". We recognize that it is an ambitious agenda and that much is at stake. We know that national efforts must be stepped up if we are to make the Agenda implementable.

We in Tanzania have integrated the SDGs into our national development plans and strategies, and in collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders, we have taken various steps to ensure effective implementation at the national level. Our second national five-year development plan, launched in June, whose theme is "Nurturing industrialization for economic transformation and human development", as well as our new 2016-2020 poverty reduction strategy for Zanzibar, are informed by the outcomes of both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063. They are the basic frameworks in our efforts to improve the welfare of Tanzanians and ensure that no one is left behind.

In spite of our national efforts, and a significant drive to mobilize domestic resources for implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, we have learned that on our own we cannot realize those ambitious goals in a timely manner. Individual and collective efforts at the local, national and international levels are imperative. We have an international and regional obligation to discharge our commitments in keeping with Goal 17 of the SDGs, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Gender equality and women's empowerment, as fundamental human rights, have now become an acceptable and enduring theme in humankind's pursuit of equality and justice, a scale for measuring social progress and an important goal in realizing sustainable development. Women's political and economic participation in leadership roles and decision-making strengthens democracy and equality and gives vigour to the economy. That is the essence of Goal 5.

Moreover, while women's empowerment and full participation in society are important goals in themselves, they are vital to reducing poverty, achieving universal education, improving maternal and child health and fulfilling other development goals. Economic development is also a strategic tool for expanding women's political participation and leadership. Without a capacity to generate their own

incomes, women face considerable barriers to reaching higher levels of education and obtaining health care and the autonomy needed to participate in politics. Collectively and universally, they represent more than half of the human resources and potential skills and talents available to humankind in our societies.

Tanzania is committed to promoting women's empowerment at all levels. We are striving to bring more women into the formal sector through capacity-building programmes and advocacy. We have removed discriminatory laws and policies with the aim of empowering women, including by reforming our land laws to entitle all to inheritance and equal access to land. Tanzania has continued to act to improve women's representation in decision-making bodies. The 2010 general elections saw 126 women elected, and by 2015 that number had increased to 142, amounting to 36.9 per cent of all parliamentarians in the country. It was during the 2015 elections that President Magufuli chose the first-ever female Vice-President of the United Republic of Tanzania, who also happens to be the person participating in the United Nations initiative for the empowerment of women. That reaffirms my country's determination to see more women in key decision-making positions and to continue scaling up such initiatives to empower women in Tanzania. The process is also increasingly owned by women themselves.

Goal 16 of the SDGs recognizes that corruption undermines efforts to combat poverty and gender inequality. It denies access and acts as a tax on poor families in their access to their rights to public services. That is why the Government of Tanzania has waged a war on corruption by mainstreaming transparency, accountability and effectiveness in the delivery of services by public institutions. We have instituted mechanisms to promote ethical standards and ensure that those holding public office recognize that their primary responsibility is to provide quality and timely service to the public. We have complemented those efforts by enhancing public awareness of the evils of corruption. But national efforts to curb corruption cannot yield sustainable results without support from the international community. Developed countries must hold their investors and multinational companies accountable by ensuring that they pay the taxes they owe. In order to contribute to financing our development, they must also be ready to return the assets and funds that some unscrupulous leaders and individuals steal from developing countries and hide in overseas accounts.

We all know that young people are very important to a nation's development. They are not only the leaders of tomorrow, they are also the partners of today. Ignoring them can lead to catastrophe, as they are easily lured into harmful activities that are detrimental to society, such as drug trafficking and joining radical extremist groups and terrorist cells. Since young people form a large percentage of our population, we are taking measures to empower that crucial group, which we believe will champion our efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To that end, we have established a youth development fund that by March of this year had already lent a total of 1.6 billion Tanzanian shillings to 284 youth groups. We therefore call on our development partners to complement our efforts in the same cause.

One of the priorities of the Government of Tanzania is achieving inclusive and quality education for all. We believe that education is one of the most powerful and proven vehicles for attaining sustainable development, and we are working tirelessly to ensure that all girls and boys receive a free primary and secondary education. The Government has reformed its curriculum to improve its provision of a quality education capable of addressing the needs of the twenty-first century. In addition, we are directing our education policy and strategy in order to reach specific vulnerable and marginalized populations, including girls, women and those with disabilities.

When he took office, President Magafuli made primary and secondary education free for all children. The Government has set aside more than 263 billion Tanzanian shillings to cover the full cost of guaranteeing free primary and secondary education for all, thereby demonstrating its commitment to providing free, quality education to the people. The objective is to ensure that we meet target 4.1 of Sustainable Development Goal 4, which requires States to ensure that "all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education".

Climate change is poised to undermine national efforts to reduce poverty. The losses of human, natural, financial, social and physical capital caused by the adverse effects of climate change are of great concern to Tanzania as it strives to attain sustainable development. That is why we have made climate-change adaptation a

national priority. Based on the effects of climate change, we have prepared a national adaptation programme of action and subsequent national adaptation plans for Tanzania, aimed at identifying immediate and long-term actions for addressing climate change through our national climate-change strategy.

It is our hope that the Green Climate Fund and other funds will provide the financial resources needed to address adaptation requirements, as their unavailability limits the delivery of national obligations. Our modest estimates show that we need approximately $500 million annually to address the already vivid impacts of climate change. It is therefore important for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to enhance efforts to address barriers to financial resources from such funds. That will allow developing countries, particularly those that are least developed, to access the necessary resources urgently and without conditionality.

The adoption of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change was truly historic. At the time of ratifying the Agreement, Tanzania submitted its intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs) on both adaptation and mitigation under the Paris Agreement, and was among the first countries to do so. That was a demonstration of our firm commitment to fulfilling our obligations on the protection of the planet and humankind in general. Our INDCs cover both adaptation and mitigation in the context of our national development vision. With over 48 million hectares of forested land, which is more than 54 per cent of our land mass, Tanzania is already making a great contribution to the global community in terms of carbon sink. However, it concerns us that our nationally determined contributions as a global community are not adding up to the collective numbers that will make the world safe for humankind. Those countries with more responsibility and capacity must take the lead by reducing their emissions, since otherwise the Paris Agreement on Climate Change will have very limited effect, if any at all.

Tanzania has not been spared by the world drug problem. Illicit drugs trafficked from other regions are crossing our borders, and some of them remain in our communities. During his inaugural speech at the current session of Parliament, my President made a strong commitment to fighting illicit drug dealers and traffickers. In addressing the issue of international criminality, bringing major dealers to justice will be among the priorities on his agenda. In the clear knowledge that corruption is a barrier to fighting this menace, we are determined to tackle both evils concurrently. Our resolve will remain unshaken, and the Government will continue to strengthen control over the trade in and use of drugs. We need international cooperation in fighting these international crimes.

The horrific terrorist attacks in 1998 on the American Embassy in Dar-es-Salaam is a tragedy our people cannot forget. The increasing speed with which attacks by terrorists and other radical groups have spread around the world has caused the loss of life of thousands of innocent people and the destruction of property. Such acts continue to undermine national, regional and global efforts to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development. Tanzania is cooperating with the international community to address this global threat and has taken several practical steps, including enacting the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 2002, the Prevention of Terrorism Regulations of 2014, the Money Laundering Act of 2006 and the Amendment to Money Laundering Regulations of 2013. A Financial Intelligence Unit in the Ministry of Finance has also been put in place to combat the financing of terrorism. Furthermore, the Government has established a national counter-terrorism strategy, which coordinates the counter-terrorism efforts of our agencies. It is becoming increasingly evident that Tanzania, and East Africa as a whole, form part of the global terrorist agenda and strategy.

While strengthening our legal framework and capacities to confront this menace, we continue to enhance international cooperation in dealing with terrorism. If we do not take stern measures now, we risk denying our achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. International terrorism has a grand strategy that intends to envelop and shackle not only East Africa but West Africa and North Africa too, before marching towards Southern Africa. This is a serious threat that must be collectively acknowledged and tackled by the international community.

On the subject of regional conflicts in Africa, Tanzania is concerned about the ongoing conflict in Burundi and its impact, including loss of life, damage to property and the displacement of persons. Tanazania has been one of the host countries for the refugees that flee Burundi sporadically. It is currently hosting more than 165 Burundian refugees who left because of the most recent conflict.

The East African Community member States are working hard to ensure the return of peace to Burundi. We believe that, under the able leadership of His Excellency Mr. Kaguta Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda, as a mediator and His Excellency Mr. Benjamin William Mkapa, former President of Tanzania, as a facilitator, the peace process, which is now back on track, will regain its former vigour so that it becomes as inclusive as possible and succeeds sooner rather than later.

Tanzania joins the international community in condemning the recent resumption of conflict in South Sudan. The situation has derailed the progress we had made towards settlement of the conflict and the reunification of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, in which Tanzania and South Africa played a significant role. We call upon the parties to the conflict in South Sudan to continue working together in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)-led efforts to bring about peace. We hope the positive effects of the August 2015 IGAD peace agreement will continue to prevail and enable the peace process to move forward swiftly and successfully.

As the current Chair of the East African Community, Tanzania convened an Extraordinary Summit earlier this month to address the ongoing political impasse and security crises in both Burundi and South Sudan. It is my hope that both countries will put their national interests, particularly those of their people, first and end the conflicts. We invite the international community to take an interest in these issues, while leaving leadership to the East African Community. These conflicts must continue to be of concern not only to Africa but to the rest of the world, as they impact upon international peace and security.

The Security Council and the General Assembly have adopted numerous resolutions on Palestine and Western Sahara that demand attention and action. The non-implementation of these decisions erodes the credibility of the Organization. As States Members of the United Nations, we must ensure that we put into practice that which we deliberate and agree upon.

Unilateral sanctions and embargoes imposed on countries are a hindrance to development and affect innocent civilians. While we welcome the resumption of bilateral relations between the United States and Cuba, we continue to reiterate our position in favour of the total elimination of embargoes for the betterment of the peoples of both countries. The early lifting of sanctions and embargoes will strengthen relations for the mutual benefit of both parties, the United States and Cuba.

We are currently witnessing a new process for selecting the next Secretary-General. We welcome the hearings of the General Assembly on all aspirants. The process has shown that it is possible for the new Secretary-General to be selected transparently and democratically by all Member States. Furthermore, my delegation is of the view that the Security Council should submit more than one name to the General Assembly for voting. In addition, Tanzania wishes to reaffirm the decision of the African Union Summit during its twenty-seventh ordinary session, held in July, that the selection of the Secretary-General should respect the principle of geographical rotation and take into account gender balance. The selection of the Secretary-General in 2016 will send a clear signal that the permanent members of the Security Council are also ready and willing to embark upon a reform of the Security Council. That process will enhance the credibility of the United Nations and begin the long-overdue reforms of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

In conclusion, Tanzania wishes to pay particular tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his team, who will be ending their tenure at the end of 2016. Under the stewardship of Mr. Ban Ki-moon, who led the Organization by example, we have been able to address in all honesty global issues ranging from climate change to development and peace and security. If other issues have lagged behind, he has at least put them on the agenda of the United Nations. We look forward to the new Secretary-General picking up where Ban Ki-moon leaves off.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Valentin Rybakov, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

Mr. Rybakov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): A year ago, world leaders gave the green light to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The document is now our common guide for the next 15 years. In the history of the Organization, there have been similar grand initiatives. Unfortunately, some of them have remained confined to paper, such as the idea 40 years ago of establishing a new world economic order. I very much hope that a similar fate does not befall the current Agenda. Yet such fears do exist. The main problem is

that the world lacks systemic stability, which means that there is no confidence in what will come tomorrow, and there is no confidence that the world is evolving in accordance with rational order and common sense. Wars, conflicts and increasing transnational challenges give rise to a feeling of chaos, a chaos that exists side by side with unprecedented interconnectedness and scientific and technological progress. In other words, we are living in conditions of contradictory realities.

How has chaos become a serious contender with positive a globalization progress? I think there are three answers to that question — political, economic and social. From a political point of view, problems have arisen because the so-called winners of the Cold War did not want to integrate the losers into their system. Furthermore, as was the case with the First World War, the victors tried to impose their will on the vanquished and to unilaterally carry out sweeping global changes that affected everyone, not just themselves. That attempt was unsuccessful. It could not have been otherwise. It is probably true that history does teach us something here. The consequences of that attempt were terrible — the destruction of States, festering conflicts, mega-terrorism, large movements of people in the form of migration. As a result, in terms of politics, the world is now in a period of transition. However, we do not know what we are moving towards.

We must also consider the economic factor. In that context, there has always been a conflict between the State and the market — at least since the time of the Industrial Revolution. Balanced and healthy competition is unquestionably useful for economic progress and reducing poverty and inequality. However, in recent decades the balance has been disturbed. The market has gained the upper hand and the State has been relegated to second place. That has happened because it was the objective pursued by so-called corporate capital, which has dominated life in leading developed countries. And what has that free market given us? The minority — the true advocate of corporate capital — has achieved even greater wealth. For everybody else corporate capital has meant nothing but suffering and problems.

It is also important that the market has seriously exacerbated the environmental challenges that the world faces. The market is not concerned with anything except profit. What does the market care about the environment?

Problems of a social nature are probably not so obvious to the general public. At the same time, they are no less serious and no less dangerous than the challenges we face in the political and economic spheres. We are seeing growing social and cultural gaps in the world, and problems of identity loom large. As a result we are spending more and more time arguing about essentially spiritual matters. Without question, there are understandable reasons for the advent of a counterculture in various countries half a century ago. There is also an explanation for how that phenomenon has changed social relations in the West, particularly in the areas of morals, moral values and the family. However, there is something that makes no sense and that is why such changes should affect the rest of the world. Why should those who have accepted the changes impose them on others whose historical contexts were different and whose societies therefore had no reason to adopt similar changes?

Understanding the reasons for the advent of an unstable world that is full of contradictions is certainly important. That is the first step towards action. Therefore, what do we have to do to change the negative global context? In political terms, we have to have a clear understanding of where we want to go from the current period of transition. What is the new world order that we are endeavouring to create? Of course, that is easier said than done. In that context, I cannot help but quote the outstanding thinker Immanuel Kant who said that

> "building a just and peaceful international system is the most difficult of all tasks and a perfect solution is impossible".

We all have ideas about how to change the world, but those ideas are different and we will all have to sacrifice something if we want to enact a change for the better. The result will reflect the lowest common denominator, but that is inevitable. I am not going to try to predict what the reality of this new world order will be in terms of its form and content. I would just like to focus attention on three principles that we think are essential to building that world order.

First, the new system should be State-driven. States remain, as they have been, the main players in international life. Where States are non-existent or weak, anarchy, chaos and violence reign. Secondly, the new world order should be inclusive. That means that all States, without exception, should have a voice — a real

voice, not just one for the sake of appearances. Thirdly, I am deeply convinced that the new system cannot be imposed; it needs to be cultivated. Only then would it be considered fair by both politicians and ordinary people.

In terms of the economy, we have been seeing positive trends, notably in connection with the re-establishment of a balance between the State and the market. The financial and economic crisis of the past decade demonstrated the failure of free-market ideas. As a result, around the world we have been seeing the re-establishment and strengthening of the State role in economic affairs. It is important for that trend to continue. Belarus has in the past consistently been committed to the idea of a strong State, especially in economic matters, and we plan to continue that policy in the future. It is the will of the Belarusian people, which was clearly expressed in June at the Belarusian People's Assembly.

In the context of economics, another important trend is towards regional integration. To some extent, regional blocs have begun to play an independent role — one which until recently had been the prerogative of States. Since that seems to be the trend, there is a pressing need to establish cooperation mechanisms for regional processes similar to those we have established for States. Belarus holds that theme very close to heart. Belarus, as an active participant in a number of regional integration processes, remains very committed thereto. We have a vested interest in strengthening those processes and are deeply convinced that cooperation with other regional initiatives will facilitate that task. Our approach could be summed up as "integrating integration". To assist in implementing that concept, we shall soon convene a conference on this issue in Minsk, with the support of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

Finally, on the need for action in social and cultural areas, let us begin with a very simple fact. We are all different as a result of a host of different factors — geography, climate, wars, epidemics, religions and many others. Those factors have made us who we are. Tradition and culture cannot be changed. They have the power to unite. In a given territory they unite the people who died there, the people who are living there now and the people who have not yet been born. It is therefore obvious that imposing our preferences on each other is a mistaken and pointless endeavour.

What we need in this situation is dialogue, both dialogue to understand one another and dialogue that is a goal in itself. Dialogue should be an ongoing process that helps to find common ground among the different social and cultural approaches and that yields a positive result.

Let us consider the concept of the family as an example. We in Belarus are committed to the values of a traditional family, while in other countries there may be a recognition of a variety of types of family. We think that the individual is part of a family. Others, however, may assume that the family belongs to the individual. We do not need to demonstrate to each other the rightness of our particular approach. Instead, we should understand why we hold different positions. Can our different approaches lead to some kind of positive result? I think they can.

The Republic of Belarus sees an opportunity for addressing such approaches at the meeting of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs scheduled for March 2017, at which a draft resolution will be proposed on the role of the family in preventing illicit drug trafficking. We all have an interest in an effective fight against that challenge. We need to think together about how the family may be able to help in that area, despite the fact that we may understand the concept of family differently.

If Member States really want to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, they need to restore world stability and overcome the growing chaos. I am convinced that this is possible, and that the United Nations, with its wealth of expertise, has the potential to help States in that endeavour. In any case, it is important that the United Nations work on practical implementation of the Agenda rather than immerse itself in the usual optimization, synchronization and report-writing. It is important to recognize that the Secretariat has not always worked in harmony with Member States. We hope that situation will change for the better under the new Head of our Organization.

The new Agenda for the United Nations, like the current global context, poses significant challenges for us. Looking at the prospects for their implementation, I call on everyone to be guided by the words of the second Secretary-General, Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld, who said,

> "Never measure the height of a mountain until you have reached the top. Then you will see how low it was."

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Caleb Otto, chair of the delegation of the Republic of Palau.

Mr. Otto (Palau): On behalf of His Excellency Mr. Tommy Esang Remengesau Jr., the President of the Republic of Palau, I have the honour to make the following remarks at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly.

At the outset, Palau would like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson on his election to lead our work at the seventy-first session. We are confident that he will rise to the many challenges and make the Pacific islands proud. We pledge him our support. We also wish to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Mogens Lykketoft for his sterling leadership during the past year. His presidency will be known for championing participation and transparency.

We join other Pacific nations in extending our heartiest congratulations to Fiji on bringing home to the Pacific islands from Rio de Janeiro the first-ever Olympic gold medal. We would also like to take this opportunity to commend and thank the people of Brazil for successfully hosting the thirty-first Olympiad. Palau believes in the power of sport as an important enabler of sustainable development, and we contributed to the idea of sport being included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as expressed in paragraph 37 of that document. The power of sport to uplift the human spirit was demonstrated when a team composed of refugees was allowed to compete in the Olympic Games in Rio. We congratulate the refugee team, Brazil and sport for walking the talk about inclusiveness.

A year ago, as we began our address to the General Assembly (see A/70/PV.28), we stated that we lived in perilously challenging yet still hopeful times. As we meet today, the perils of climate change and global conflicts still exist. Other challenges, such as those posed by the flow of migrants and refugees, as well as by terrorism and violent extremism, have become more prominent, bringing with them psychosocial damage and despair. Addressing antimicrobial resistance and nuclear testing issues have also become matters of urgency.

Amid those challenges we still have bases for holding onto hope. The high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, held recently, gave us an opportunity to explore ways to address the issue, and we eagerly await the report from that meeting.

We commend Ambassador Gómez Camacho of Mexico for his excellent work on the Political Declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on antimicrobial resistance (resolution 71/3). We trust that the Declaration will galvanize much-needed action throughout United Nations agencies and on the ground in all States Members of the United Nations.

Palau joins the family of nations condemning the nuclear testing conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We are concerned with the peace and long-term stability of the Pacific region. The proximity of Palau to the launching site places us at particular risk. In addition, we call on Member States that have not yet ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to do so in order for us to move one step closer to total nuclear disarmament.

The impact of climate change in terms of sea-level rise, ocean acidification and the frequency and intensity of storms continues to pose an existential threat to Palau and other small island developing States. Palau participated actively in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change processes and was one of the countries that strongly advocated for making Goal 13 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) a stand-alone goal on climate change. Palau is proud to have been the second, following Fiji, of the 60 nations to have ratified the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, bringing the total number of ratifications to approximately 48 per cent of the membership, with 55 per cent of Member States required for the Agreement to enter into force. We are encouraged by the 130 nations that have signed the Agreement and are confident that by end of the year the Agreement will begin to work for all of us.

In addition, we are hopeful that a Special Representative of the Secretary-General for climate change and security will be appointed. Such an appointment will provide an effective working link between the Secretary-General, the General Assembly and the Security Council on matters dealing with peace and security arising from climate change.

It is imperative that no effort be spared to ensure that global temperature rise remains under 1.5°C. Furthermore, access to financial and technological resources must be made available to small island developing States and all those who need it most.

Fourteen years is a short period within which to achieve the 17 goals of 2030 Agenda, which is why we agree with the sense of urgency expressed in the word "push" in the theme for the seventy-first session of the United Nations: "The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world". There is an urgent need to transform our world in the face of severe climate change impacts, global conflicts resulting in the unprecedented migration of refugees and poverty exacerbated by huge gaps in resource use and ownership. There is a need to push — either to jump-start or go further than we have gone already. A push is indeed necessary as we have already lost a year of implementation.

In Palau we are in the process of integrating the 17 Goals into our national and sectoral plans so that we can implement the 2030 Agenda in a holistic manner. As part of that effort, we have taken an initiative that for us represents a concrete path towards achievement of the SDGs: the National Marine Sanctuary, which we began to implement in 2015.

The National Marine Sanctuary sets aside as a no-take zone 80 per cent of our total exclusive economic zone — an area of over half a million square kilometres of our ocean. The Palau National Marine Sanctuary is an initiative based on a traditional practice of conservation called *Bul*, which imposes a moratorium on the exploitation of diminishing resources in order to allow them to replenish themselves. The National Marine Sanctuary will therefore allow our ocean to regain its health, replenish its fish stocks and make progress in the rejuvenation of the biodiversity within it. By strengthening the ocean-based activities of diving, snorkeling, kayaking, swimming and catch-and-release sport fishing, the Sanctuary will boost Palau tourism, which is the main engine of our economy. More important, it will allow us to pass on a healthy ocean and its heritage to our children and the generations to follow.

In addition to facilitating the achievement of Goals 13 and 14, the increased income from tourism will allow us to provide basic services, such water and sanitation, and to ensure food security. It will allow us to address the other Goals, including the eradication of extreme poverty, the improvement of health, including addressing the predominance of non-communicable diseases, the strengthening of education, building stronger community resilience and improved information and communication technology to facilitate stronger and more effective disaster resilience. We will also be able to address the special needs of children, the elderly and persons with disabilities, including those with mental illnesses. One of the important outcomes we want from the 2030 Agenda is the promotion of the mental health and well-being for all citizens of Palau.

The success of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary will depend to a great extent upon what happens in the areas beyond national jurisdiction, since fish stocks and the health of biodiversity do not have specific boundaries. Palau is therefore grateful that, in accordance with resolution 69/292, a new implementing agreement is under consideration through Preparatory Committee negotiations designed to come up with a comprehensive global regime to better address the conservation and sustainable use of the marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. We are hopeful that the two Preparatory Committees will continue to make positive progress towards a strong implementing agreement. It would contribute greatly to the successful achievement of the objectives of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary.

Genuine and durable partnerships are also critical to the success of the Sanctuary initiative. Conducting the monitoring and surveillance of such a vast area is very challenging when we are so constrained in our financial, technological and human resources. This underpins the importance of Goal 17 and the significance of genuine and durable partnerships so strongly advocated for in the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action, also known as the Samoa Pathway. In that context, we also wish to recommend that all of us consider partnering with God in our work: He is the only faithful, genuine and durable partner.

Palau has been fortunate to have many friends and development partners that have assisted us in our National Marine Sanctuary initiative, our renewable energy efforts and our sustainable development activities. In that regard, we wish to acknowledge with gratitude the strong partnerships that we have enjoyed with the United States of America, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, the European Union, Italy, India and Taiwan. We are especially grateful for the assistance they have already given us for the Marine Sanctuary, on climate change and in other areas of development.

The Republic of China — Taiwan — provided assistance that helped us to achieve our Millennium

Development Goals, and we look forward to continued support from it towards our achievement of the 2030 Agenda. We urge the United Nations system to involve Taiwan in the processes for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We will need all the resources we can garner, and it will require the participation of every global citizen to have the push we need to be successful. The mantra "no one left behind" must refer not only to benefits, but also to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Agenda was universal in its development and is universal in its transformational goals. It must also be universal in its implementation. Finally, Taiwan possesses technical capacity in many areas which can be shared with the world. It should therefore participate in international meetings, mechanisms and frameworks, such as the World Health Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization and various economic partnerships, inter alia.

When we talk about participating in and benefiting from the 2030 Agenda, we think of enablers of achievement. Accordingly, in addition to applauding the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba, we would advocate for lifting the embargo so Cuba can have the resources it requires to meet its developmental goals. In addition, we join others in advocating for an amenable resolution to the problem in West Papua through meaningful and constructive dialogue.

Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Before I conclude, I would be remiss if I did not express, on behalf of Palau, our profound appreciation for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. He is the first Secretary-General to visit the Pacific, and he never wavered in his desire to ensure that the existential threats to the most vulnerable small island developing States were addressed. Under his stewardship, among other things, we achieved the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We wish him and his family well in their future endeavours.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon often said,

> "We are the first generation that can end poverty and the last that can end climate change."

We agree and salute him for the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement, which, if implemented effectively, will help end poverty and climate change, respectively. Our resolve to leave no one behind should be about those who need help and about those who can offer help. Addressing climate change and achieving the 2030 Agenda requires political will, resolve, commitment of resources and goodwill. There is no room for political barriers.

I am reminded of what the Secretary-General said in his statement at the opening of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly. On the topic of barriers, he said,

> "Far too often, I have seen widely supported proposals blocked ... by a few or sometimes even just one country ... Time and again, I have seen essential action and good ideas blocked ...
>
> "Is it fair, in this complicated twenty-first century, for any one country, or a few countries, to yield such disproportionate power and hold the world hostage on so many important issues?
>
> "The global public is right to ask whether this is how an Organization in which we have invested so much hope and so many aspirations should function". (*A/71/PV.8, pp. 3-4*).

In that vein, Palau supports Security Council reform, including expansion of the permanent membership to include two seats for Africa and one seat for small island developing States. Our generation will either rise to meet the challenges or be condemned to face regrets from future generations. We can make the choice. Palau has shown the choice it has already made.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Ms. Marie-Louise Potter, Head of the Delegation of Seychelles.

Ms. Potter (Seychelles): Allow me to add Seychelles' voice to those who have congratulated Ambassador Peter Thomson on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session. I also thank Mr. Mogens Lykketoft for his commitment and strong leadership as the President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session.

Humankind finds itself on the cusp of achieving the immeasurable in terms of making a true difference to all peoples of the world. As we embark upon this new collaborative journey, our sustained momentum could be a catalyst for positive change. We need an institution that is not afraid of change and is able to address the challenges of the twenty-first century. Such terms as

inclusiveness, compromise and equality should resonate throughout the Organization. On this note, allow me to reiterate Seychelles' calls for fair reform within this Hall, while renewing our commitment to the ideals of the Charter of the United Nations.

The chosen theme for this year's Assembly, "The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world", reminds us of the urgency of the present moment. Within the context of change and transformation, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) played a significant and crucial role, which was to herald a much-needed call for nations to improve the livelihoods of society's weak and marginalized by addressing poverty in its many forms, while also promoting human rights and environmental sustainability.

Seychelles is proud to have achieved most of the targets set out in the MDGs and remains eager to fulfil its responsibility to sustain the momentum in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Yes, we recognize that progress has been made both nationally and internationally, but we also recognize that much still needs to be done.

In Seychelles that recognition is reflected by our push to integrate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063 into our national development strategy. However, I believe that the path to transformation is not one that can be travelled alone. SDG 17, which focuses on global partnership for sustainable development, reaffirms this point.

For real change to occur, the world will need to stand together in ensuring that strong action is backed by the adequate financial support that is needed for overall achievement of the Goals, including giving due consideration to the special conditions that small States and small island developing States are faced with. The implementation of a vulnerability index in development frameworks would enable a fairer measurement of economies and serve as a more appropriate reference tool for financial support than the traditionally emphasized per capita gross domestic product.

Goal 14 in particular plays a pertinent role in our peoples' lives. The conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development has become pivotal to the survival of small-island economies.

As a champion of the Blue Economy initiative, which is directed at reinforcing marine-related activities for sustainability purposes, Seychelles recognizes that our oceans present an abundance of untapped opportunities for sustained growth. It is therefore imperative to highlight that the Blue Economy concept and SDG 14 are synonymous with the global action to harness the power of the oceans as a tool for transformation. It is important in this endeavour that we shift the paradigm and view the world in innovative ways. In relation to the Blue Economy, the "blue bonds" initiative and the debt-swap agreement serve as tangible examples of Seychelles' contribution to the debate.

One of the elements underpinning the Blue Economy approach is action to address climate change. Because Seychelles is an island nation heavily dependent upon the environment for its survival, climate change and its adverse effects occupy a permanent place in the minds of our people. We are exposed to its devastating consequences not as mere bystanders, but through first-hand experience, which affects our families and threatens our livelihoods. Addressing the impacts of climate change is therefore an essential part of the discussion, as it involves the very future of our country. With this in mind, Seychelles is compelled to put itself at the forefront of the fight against climate change, for it is a battle that we cannot afford to lose. In this vein, the historic Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which Seychelles was among the first 20 States to ratify, has been an encouraging sign of the international community's renewed political will to push for positive change.

The security of our oceans forms yet another integral part of the drive towards human progress. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing imperils this progress not only by endangering our marine ecosystems, but also by harming food security and jeopardizing the livelihoods of millions of people worldwide. Seychelles therefore renews its commitment to ensuring that such violations do not go unanswered. Furthermore, although we have seen tremendous gains in the long battle fought against piracy, we need to remain vigilant and strengthen our own efforts to reduce piracy-related activities in our oceans. To that end, the work undertaken through such initiatives as the Contact Group for Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, which Seychelles currently chairs, is essential for our continued success.

Seychelles fully supports all international efforts aimed at seeking a diplomatic and political solution to the ongoing crisis in Syria, which continues to rage at the expense of the innocent. We deeply hope that a solution is found to further contribute to mitigating the spread of extremism and ideologies of hate, which continues to wreak devastating consequences on various countries throughout the world.

The World Humanitarian Summit in Turkey and the recent high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants hosted by the President of the General Assembly serve to highlight the scale of the challenges facing the global community. Such challenges also solicit deeper reflection on the plight of the more than 60 million people in the world who are displaced as a result of conflicts and natural disasters linked to climate change. Seychelles calls upon the international community for renewed collaboration among States and stronger moral resolve, as together we endeavour to address the global humanitarian crisis that is weighing heavily on the heart of humankind.

Seychelles welcomes the normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba, and we reiterate our hope to see an end to the painful economic embargo on a sister island nation.

Lastly, I wish to take this opportunity to express our utmost appreciation for the dynamism, hard work and devotion of our outgoing Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon during his term in office. He leaves behind a strong legacy of determination to create a more peaceful and equal future for the world. Furthermore, his championing of the cause of small islands will remain engraved in our collective memory. We are certain that his contributions to improving society will continue to have positive repercussions and that the new Secretary-General will follow in his righteous path.

In conclusion, I am hopeful for the future we believe in and that the inherent goodness of humankind will lead us to do what is right. At this critical time we have a shared responsibility to cast aside our differences and focus on what unites us rather than what divides us. I hope that together we can commence our universal push to transform our world, not only for ourselves but for generations to come.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ib Petersen, Chair of the Delegation of Denmark.

Mr. Petersen (Denmark): At the outset, Denmark wishes to warmly welcome and congratulate the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson of Fiji. It was an honour for Denmark to assume the presidency of the Assembly at its seventieth session, and we thank His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft for his excellent work. We wish President Thomson every success in leading our crucial work in the year ahead.

We live in volatile times. It is therefore up to all of us to strengthen international cooperation and make it more effective. We must do so in order to foster a peaceful, sustainable and rights-based international society built on the ambitious common goals that we have adopted this fall.

While the challenges facing the United Nations today may seem daunting, our recent record does give cause for optimism. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the successful conclusion of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, as well as the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit, have demonstrated our ability to come together to address today's global challenges. However, our task now is to turn our shared agenda into real change that will benefit people around the world. With a new Secretary-General coming into office, this will be a pivotal year for the United Nations.

Denmark has always believed that global challenges must be addressed through effective collective efforts, with a sharp focus on the rights and freedoms of the individual human being. Denmark has a vision for action that is based on three core elements — dignity, development and dialogue. Those elements characterize our approach to the work of the United Nations and will guide our candidacy for the Human Rights Council for the 2019-2021 term.

Around the world, many people are denied a life of dignity. Armed conflicts and violent extremism have led to human rights abuses and violations in several parts of the world. Syria, Iraq and the Sahel region are experiencing some of the most serious and urgent crises facing us today. In many other places, violence and instability are causing immeasurable human suffering. Millions of people are subject to oppression, slavery and trafficking by the dark forces of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other extremist groups, which requires a strong and determined collective response.

In Mali, Denmark actively contributes to the promotion of peace and stability. We donate to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and are engaged in long-term development cooperation with the country. In Syria and Iraq, Denmark contributes significantly to the fight against ISIL, including through support for local communities in the aftermath of conflict. We must ensure that military achievements against ISIL are followed up with determined and coordinated efforts to sustain peace. Without such efforts, we will not succeed. This autumn, Denmark will launch a new three-year regional stabilization programme for Syria and Iraq. The main focus will be to support immediate stabilization efforts in areas of Iraq that have been liberated from ISIL.

Our common security also depends on nations adhering to the norms and rules laid out by the United Nations, whether in the General Assembly, the Security Council or other organs and agencies. All countries must abide by their obligations under international law, including on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. In that regard, Denmark condemns the recent nuclear tests conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and urges the international community to respond in a strong and unified manner.

In the past week the world came together to address the mounting challenge of millions of people forced to flee from their homes due to armed conflict, natural disasters or poverty. A staggering 65 million people were displaced in 2015, requiring a determined and effective response from the United Nations. Denmark welcomes the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1), adopted last week, which underlinines the principle of shared responsibility and the importance of addressing the fundamental causes of migration. Denmark is among the largest per capita humanitarian donors in the world, and we will continue to do our part. Poverty and a lack of opportunity are among the underlying factors leading to conflict and instability; they are also key factors in driving people from their homes.

Delivery on sustainable development and the eradication of extreme poverty are vital avenues towards a free, peaceful, prosperous world and in addressing the fundamental causes of migration. Denmark's development cooperation is a concrete testament to our commitment to the United Nations and to assisting the world's poorest and most vulnerable people. Since 1978 — for almost four decades — Denmark has been meeting the target of providing 0.7 per cent of its gross national income to official development assistance. We strongly urge many more countries to meet the same goal.

A pre-eminent challenge on the path to sustainable development is climate change. We must all take up the challenge of turning the commitments set forth in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change into action, to bring about immense and positive change for the planet and for people. All of those present in this Hall can count on Denmark to be at the forefront in that endeavour — in terms of follow-up both at home and internationally. The Danish Government will put forward a motion for ratification of the Paris Agreement in the Danish Parliament on 5 October.

The Sustainable Development Goals can be achieved only if cooperation is integrated across different fields and sectors. The United Nations development system must be reformed and made truly fit for purpose. The United Nations system must completely rethink its operational approach. The silo mentality and internal competition for resources must become phenomena of the past.

Denmark firmly believes that we need a significantly strengthened focus on the role of young people. The 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development is essentially an agenda for future generations. Accordingly, the engagement of the world's young people in its implementation is indispensable. Young people possess enormous potential and must be involved in the work ahead.

We also need civil society, academia and the private sector to support policy implementation and provide innovative solutions and know-how. We need to engage in fruitful public-private partnerships to push implementation even further.

Governments can play an important role in further encouraging private business and investors to contribute to implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. That is why the Prime Minister of Denmark last week announced a new Sustainable Development Goals investment fund. The goal is to raise capital from private investors and reach a capital base of up to $750 million. Investments will be made across the Sustainable Development Goals — to improve energy, climate mitigation, industry, infrastructure, food production

and health care in order to generate sustainable growth, jobs and tax revenue in developing countries.

In addition, we need global free trade as an essential element in fostering long-term development and economic growth. Denmark is actively advocating for creating better market access for developing countries and improving business conditions, including at the World Trade Organization. In short, if goods pass borders, it is less likely that soldiers will.

The effectiveness of the United Nations system, and indeed our ability to turn the promise of the Sustainable Development Goals into reality, begins and ends with the willingness of Member States to work together. Addressing global challenges through dialogue is the raison d'être of the United Nations, and it resonates with Danish political tradition. That is why, from the beginning, we have been deeply engaged in building up the Organization. This is also true in very concrete terms, as the Trusteeship Council Chamber, located next to this General Assembly Hall, was designed by the Danish architect Finn Juhl, whose design was precisely intended to foster dialogue among delegates, thereby promoting the democratic mission of the United Nations. In all modesty, we think he succeeded quite well.

More than 50 years of partnerships in international development with an approach based on dialogue has taught us the value of partnership in ensuring progress. As just one example, Denmark has for decades been a strong supporter of national human rights institutions and commissions, ombudsmen and other independent human rights bodies, from the Middle East to Africa and Eurasia.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women, key requirements for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, are a cornerstone of our foreign policy. Studies show that, when a girl receives just one additional year of education, she can increase her earnings by up to 20 per cent. That is important, not only for her but also for her family, her community and her country.

Denmark was extremely proud to host the Women Deliver 2016 Global Conference in Copenhagen, earlier this year. The Conference was a testimony to the importance Denmark places on ensuring women's and girls' full and equal enjoyment of all human rights. A plethora of programmes, initiatives and strategies were showcased at the Conference, providing inspiration for women and men all over the world.

At home and abroad, Denmark promotes the human rights and values of indigenous peoples. We stand for their right to control and influence their own development paths and determine matters regarding their own economic, social, political and cultural situation.

Denmark is one of the strongest voices in the global fight against torture. For decades we have ensured the successful adoption of General Assembly resolutions that further the work on the elimination of torture, as laid out in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Implementation, however, is key. That is why we — together with Chile, Ghana, Indonesia and Morocco — have launched the Convention against Torture initiative. Our goal is to work towards universal ratification and better implementation of the Convention by 2024.

As the people's Organization, the United Nations needs to do better to foster trust, transparency and efficiency. I am proud that during Mr. Lykketoft's presidency of the General Assembly important steps were taken to increase transparency in the work of the Office of the President as well in the selection process for the next Secretary-General. If the United Nations is to remain a relevant and legitimate organization for peace, development and human rights, we must continue on the path of increased openness and transparency. That is in the shared interest of all Member States.

In conclusion, allow me, on behalf of the Government of Denmark, to take this opportunity to also pay tribute to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon. Denmark salutes the progressive leadership and determination that the Secretary-General has displayed through a difficult and very challenging period in the history of the United Nations. He has tirelessly led the way to finding viable solutions to global challenges, in particular climate change, which has been a journey that led us from Bali to Copenhagen and, finally, to Paris, and which resulted, last December, in an ambitious global agreement to fight climate change. Denmark reiterates its appreciation for the progressive leadership and determination of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

It is of the utmost importance that the new Secretary-General show the same determination as his predecessor

in forcefully addressing the challenges posed to the millions of displaced persons, refugees and migrants across the world, while ensuring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and undertaking the necessary crucial reforms of the United Nations. As we strive to reform the Organization, Denmark will stand by the side of the next Secretary-General and continue to support and take active and constructive part in the critical work of the United Nations going forward.

The Acting President: I now call on Mr. Kokou Kpayedo, Chair of the Delegation of the Togolese Republic.

Mr. Kpayedo (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to deliver to the General Assembly a message from the His Excellency Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, President of the Togolese Republic.

> "It is with a feeling of shared joy that we take part in the seventy-first session of the General Assembly dedicated to the theme "The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world". First of all, I would like to express my congratulations to Mr. Peter Thomson on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session.
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> "I also wish to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who has worked tirelessly to strengthen the work of our Organization during the past decade. Mr. Ban Ki-moon was able to successfully guide the United Nations in the process towards the design and adoption of a new framework that will lead the Organization and the people of the planet for the next 15 years. I am speaking of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.
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> "A year ago, we adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the aim of transforming the world. Since then, we have together begun the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda to build a more prosperous, inclusive and secure world. I am therefore happy to see the relevance of the central theme submitted to Member States, because the realization of the SDGs definitely requires a new impetus of our countries individually and collectively and a resolute commitment by the entire international community.
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> "At the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council in July, Togo, a pilot country for the Sustainable Development Goals, offered to participate in an exercise on the advancement of the integration of the SDGs into the strategies and national development programmes. On that occasion, we were able to show progress in the implementation of our SDG road map, and we were also able to share the significant progress we have made in the implementation of key actions to leave no one behind.
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> "Specifically, our country has made significant progress in economic growth, the reduction of poverty and the promotion of peaceful democracy, and remains determined to do everything we can to ensure genuine, inclusive and sustainable growth. Because of that determination, we launched, with national financing and the assistance of United Nations Development Programme, the implementation of an emergency community development programme to help significantly improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable populations in our society.
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> "Moreover, the encouragement we received in the progress in the area of human development, such as recognition by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations of the Togolese programme on the fighting hunger and malnutrition, inspires our enthusiasm to intensify investment in development favouring the most vulnerable sectors. We also welcome the fact that the SDGs confirm the validity of strategic initiatives that we have been implementing in recent years, at the level of infrastructure and economic diversification and in the improvement of the business climate and the promotion of young people's and women's entrepreneurship. Actions are under way to begin the adoption process by the end of the year of the implementation of our national sustainable development plan, which seamlessly integrates the SDGs and will follow on our accelerated growth strategy and the promotion of employment for the 2013-2017 period.
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> "Recognizing that accountability for the results and mutual learning processes among countries are determinants for speeding up our progress towards the achievement of the SDGs, Togo will participate in the voluntary review to take place at the next high-level political segment on the implementation of the SDGs. We therefore take this opportunity

before the Assembly to thank all entities of the United Nations system that have helped us in this exercise.

"It is our conviction that the SDGs should make it possible to transform the world by giving priority to the most vulnerable groups — women, young people and children, populations threatened by conflicts and disasters, migrants and refugees. The need to look out for the fortunes of our peoples who had been left behind will assume a whole new dimension as we celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development. Making development for the most vulnerable a priority is becoming increasingly crucial in the current context, which is marked by multiple and pressing challenges of persistent poverty and unemployment and threats to human security linked to climate change, disease, conflict and terrorism.

"On actions for the protection of the environment, Togo is facing major climate challenges, such as coastal erosion, flooding, desertification and unpredictable rainy seasons. I take this opportunity at the Assembly to renew our firm commitment to the Paris Agreement. My country signed the Agreement and will do everything it can to aid in concluding the ratification process by the end of 2016. We are also doing everything possible to implement it. We welcome the ratification of the Agreement, which is so important for the future and survival of our planet.

"The era we live in is also marked by a resurgence of new health challenges that compromise the progress we have realized in human and economic terms. Since we are aware of that reality, in my position as a coordinator of the Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak Response Plan in West Africa, I would like to thank all partners and organizations that made it possible for us to contain and even eliminate this epidemic.

"Continuing in the area of health, I would like to pay tribute to all the organizations and Member States that contributed to reducing the incidence of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Despite the progress, we must not lower our guard because new health threats are on the horizon — diseases that in the past were under control but might resurge. We need to reinforce our health systems and policies in order to eradicate diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, better fight maternal and infant mortality and protect our world against antimicrobial resistance.

"No development programme will be able to succeed and be sustainable if the national context in which it is to be implemented is not imbued with peace and cohesion. That is why my Government has deployed so many efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, which are considered to be the root causes of insecurity and terrorism. Furthermore, we are working towards strengthening democracy and the rule of law by implementing political and institutional reforms that are consistent with the realities in our countries. In that regard, the recently created the Togolese High Commission for Reconciliation and Strengthening National Unity organized a workshop in July to reflect on and exchange views among all components of the Togolese nation with regard to establishing the bases for reforms that have not yet taken effect.

"We are also working to step up democracy at the local level in order to provide a better chance for the success of our development strategy to reduce regional disparity. In order to do that, an accelerated plan of action and decentralization is also being implemented and should lead in the near future to local elections.

"In the area of the protection and promotion of human rights, we are determined to strengthen our achievements in order to better guarantee fundamental freedoms. We also plan to make better use of our term in the Human Rights Council for the 2016-2018 period. In that regard, my country, which has undertaken a number of reforms in accordance with the recommendations resulting from the first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review, is preparing for the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review, which will take place from 31 October to 11 November.

"The noble objectives that our countries have set for themselves, in particular in the areas of sustainable development and the protection of the climate for future generations, cannot be achieved unless peace and security are guaranteed throughout the world. In that regard, despite the efforts that have been made under the auspices of our Organization and regional institutions, peace and security continue to be threatened or put at risk in certain regions. In Africa, Togo very much

hopes that the efforts made by the United Nations and regional African organizations will help to bring peace to South Sudan and Libya, to cite but two countries. In that regard, Togo welcomes the fruitful discussions that took place in the African Union Peace and Security Council several days ago regarding South Sudan's future, and calls upon the parties involved to spare no effort in strengthening the country's foundations. Elsewhere in the world, my country calls upon all parties involved in the Syrian conflict to work in good faith to ensure that the Syrian people, crippled by a long conflict that has destabilized the whole region, can once again find peace, security and stability.

"As we all know, the Syrian and the Libyan crises in particular are fuelling the scourge of terrorism, from which no region in the world is currently spared. I would like to once again remember the countless victims of terrorism and to express Togo's solidarity with the countries and populations that have recently fallen victim to the scourge. An effective counter-terrorism strategy requires States to continue working together by further strengthening the cooperation among their relevant technical units. The wealthiest countries must also agree to support more than they do already States like Togo that do not have the necessary resources to effectively fight terrorism.

"In the light of the increasing risks and threats in our world today, our top priority must be to equip ourselves with the means to effectively and swiftly address the varying challenges that are affecting the well-being of our populations and limiting our economic development. Security threats are a huge risk for our agenda of transforming the world and require us to intensify our efforts to promote international peace and security. To meet that requirement, my country will host the African Union Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa from 10 to 15 October. The Summit's aim is to agree on a joint declaration that can better prevent and address maritime insecurity and promote sustainable and inclusive development of the blue economy in line with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement. I wish to once again take this opportunity to extend an invitation to Member States to take part in the high-level Summit, which will involve all stakeholders from my country.

"Seventy years after its creation, the United Nations has greatly contributed to progress in the world by promoting peace, sustainable development and human rights. It has been able to bring about such change by reforming some of its own organs in order to take into account the world's shifting circumstances, which Togo welcomes. However, our Organization, which continues to work towards the rooting of democracy in its Member States, has found it difficult to reform the Security Council. Its current composition does not reflect real development in the world. My country believes that it is high time for Member States, and particularly for the five permanent members of the Council, to resolve to undertake a reform of the organ, which is the only way to avoid the frequent deadlock that prevents the Council from taking action and rapidly solving crises and conflicts. At a time when the international community is resolutely committed to pursuing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for the benefit of all, any further delay in the process of reforming the Security Council can only be harmful to the fulfilment of the SDGs.

"Addressing all of those challenges calls for effective and inclusive mobilization with the means to bring about the necessary changes for a better world. More specifically, a transformation of the African economy is key to eliminating poverty and hunger, providing young people with a future and curbing economic migrants. Such transformation is also the best protection against terrorism and the world's growing insecurity and is essential in giving fresh impetus to growth and in reducing pressure on the environment. Transforming the African economy will help to solve the world's challenges, but we must stay in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and be mobilized for subsequent investments through various mechanisms, in accordance with Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

"Our collective ambition is the well-being of everyone, which means that no one should be left behind. In that regard, efforts need to be undertaken that favour Africa, which is home to the greatest number of poor countries, in order to ensure its inclusion in the world economy. Moreover, the African continent remains an important lever for transforming the world in the SDG era, as it offers huge potential for a profound transformation of

our world, with a youth population full of vitality, dynamic demographic growth, a wealth of natural resources, ingenuity and resilient men and women. In order to benefit from Africa's potential, we must remove the obstacles that impede its social and economic development as soon as possible, in order to reap the positive benefits at a global level, including in the areas of climate, peace, security, health and the right to development.

"In the hope of an innovative United Nations partnership that can transform the world, starting with Africa, I welcome the commitment shown by the international community in its adoption of the SDGs. I remain convinced that the current session of the General Assembly will allow us to capitalize on the commitment to strengthen our collective working capacity between now and 2030, so as to bring about a world that is more secure, prosperous and equal, and which demonstrates solidarity and respects human rights, in response to the deep-seated aspirations of our peoples."

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate. Before proceeding to statements by Member States in the exercise of the right of reply, we shall now hear two closing statements on the occasion of the conclusion of our debate.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General, to make closing remarks on behalf of the Secretary-General.

The Deputy Secretary-General: I thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to make a few informal remarks at the end of the general debate on behalf of the Secretary-General, who is currently in Bogotá celebrating the peace agreement in Colombia.

I wish to commend Member States for the high quality of their statements during the general debate, the high level of attendance and the seriousness with which they have described the current situation in the world, from their different perspectives. I have not spent as much time as I would have liked to in the Hall, but I have enjoyed every minute of it when I was able to be here, and we have naturally read all the statements made. I commend members for the work they have done in preparing for this year's general debate.

This is the time of year when, here at the United Nations, we take the world's temperature, which is currently running quite high. But I also see many reasons for hope, as Member States have been very principled in their remarks, sticking to the ideals of the Organization and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respecting the work in all pillars of the United Nations, whether it be peace and security, development or human rights. The general debate has been a great tribute to internationalism and multilateralism in a day and age when those concepts are being tested.

We therefore need to understand that, in order to achieve what we want, our work in the Organization must be ongoing and tireless. If we can show enough skill and diligence to create satisfactory international solutions to today's problems, we will increasingly find that these international solutions and formulas are also in the national interest of Member States. We must therefore remove the often artificial line between the concepts of international and national. I know that the President will mention some of the highlights of the debate in his summary, but let me just mention very briefly how much the Secretary-General and I have deeply appreciated the Assembly's strong emphasis.

First of all, on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Assembly's great achievement accomplished in September last year, or rather in the three and a half years leading up to their adoption. I think it is a historic achievement. Member States have laid the foundation for a new direction in development. When one adds up the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, it is a remarkable chance for there to be a new development path for Member States and other actors worldwide to follow.

In addition, I know that the Secretary-General particularly appreciated the Assembly's strong emphasis on climate change issues. As is well known, his role in on those issues has been active and instrumental, but it would never have happened unless Member States had come to the conclusion that we must shift course in the interest of future generations, the planet and our life on it. There might be a plan B in life, but there certainly is no planet B.

I also think that the high-level meeting on refugees and migration coloured this year's general debate. Solidarity with refugees and the problems for countries of origin, countries of transit and countries of destination came to the fore, and we mobilized around

the xenophobia that sometimes is visible in today's world.

We have to make sure that we see the advantages of people moving across borders, although we know that sometimes such movements signal tremendous challenges. However, the New York Declaration, of 19 September 2016, together with the leaders' summit on refugees led by President Obama, has given a new structure to the work on refugees and migration that will be very useful. Above all, I hope that we will make sure that the Organization sends a signal that everybody is of equal value and that we need to work in such a way as to prevent xenophobic tendencies, which are so strong in today's world, from prevailing.

With respect to conflicts, I could go on forever, but I will mention only Syria — the horror of Syria, the nightmare of Syria — and both the need to move towards stopping the horrific fighting — the many strong statements made in that regard impressed us — and the need for us to then do the humanitarian work that the United Nations wants to do once the fighting is reduced in intensity. That would, in turn, lead to the possibility of starting a political process, the prospects for which look pretty sombre today. But we cannot abandon this perspective. The suffering has gone on far too long. The dangers for the region and the world are enormous. We must mobilize to stop this war.

Next, I would also like to commend the new efforts by both the General Assembly and the Security Council to accept the notion and concept of sustaining peace, that peace is something that we need to think about, in terms of both prevention — reducing violence — and post-conflict work. In that regard, I think that in our hands lies great potential, together with the Sustainable Development Goals, to cross the border lines between peace, security, development and human rights. It is a great challenge for the United Nations, and I hope that we all accept and adopt it.

The last point is simply to express, on behalf of the Secretary-General, his gratitude to the members of the General Assembly for the very generous and warm comments about his 10-year term. He has been hard at work for all these 10 years. Although I have done only half that number, I understand the tremendous pressure he has been under. But the comments made on his role in different areas, not least in climate change, have warmed his heart. I am certain of that. I will convey members' comments on his accomplishments to him. Above all, I want to convey to him the spirit in which all members have contributed to a very good general debate. This is also my own last general debate. Once again, I thank the President for giving me this opportunity to present remarks in this informal way at the end of the debate.

The Acting President: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his statement.

It is now my honour to deliver this closing statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson, who, as we speak, is participating in the signing of the Colombian peace deal in Colombia today.

> "The general debate of the General Assembly provides us with a portrait of the current state of our world, painted for us by the Heads of State, Heads of Government and Ministers of the States Members of the United Nations. Over the past six days, we have heard from members of the Assembly about their priorities and concerns as well as their hopes for peace, human rights and sustainable development. Leaders recalled and reaffirmed the spirit and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and confirmed their faith in the central role of the United Nations in international cooperation. They also addressed many of today's critical global issues.
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> "In line with the theme of the seventy-first session, many leaders expressed their commitment to implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We began with a moving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) moment, which reminded us of how transformative the SDGs will be and how urgently action is now required to implement them. I am greatly encouraged by the fact that so many Member States have already embedded the SDGs into their plans and policies. The task at hand is implementation of the SDGs, and I was encouraged by the many side events last week that emphasized the need for action.
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> "Wednesday's parallel meeting on antimicrobial resistance stressed the urgent need for a global response to address that critical issue, the impact of which threatens millions of lives and progress across the SDGs.
>
> "I reiterate my call to Member States to see the SDGs included in the education curriculums

of every country around the world. It is the young people of the world who must know the SDGs in all their universal and integrated dimensions, since they will be the inheritors of the 2030 Agenda.

"Action on climate change is of course essential. I congratulate the Secretary-General on the success of his Paris Agreement ratification ceremony last week. I note that we now need ratifications from parties to the Agreement covering only a further 7.5 per cent of global greenhouse-gas emissions to see the Agreement enter into force. I am confident we will see this happen prior to the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Morocco. I urge all members not just to ratify the agreement promptly, but to scale up the level of ambition in reducing emissions in order to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, and to mobilize the climate finance required to support vulnerable countries like the small island developing States and others.

"Looking ahead, I am glad that many leaders identified the forthcoming third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, in Ecuador next month, and the SDG 14 conference on oceans, to take place in June 2017, as additional major opportunities to drive SDG implementation.

"The plight of refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants across our world was a focus of last week's deliberations. The adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1) at last Monday's high-level summit was an important step forward. The summit launched a process that I will take forward during this session with a view to adopting two global compacts on migrants and on refugees in 2018.

"The current global humanitarian and refugee crisis has its roots in a number of ongoing conflicts in our world and has been exacerbated by the impacts of climate change. I joined the Secretary-General and Member States in condemning the unacceptable attacks on a United Nations aid convoy in Aleppo and in calling for a renewed effort on the part of global and regional powers to find a peaceful political solution.

"Many Member States called for a resumption of the Middle East peace process in order to find a lasting solution. They also stressed the need to solve other conflicts and to address the spread of violent extremism and terrorism.

"In relation to United Nations capacities in maintaining international peace and security, many recalled the historic endorsement by the General Assembly and the Security Council of the concept of sustaining peace, while several Member States made reference to the importance of women's participation in peace processes and of implementing commitments following the 2015 review of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security.

"Numerous speakers stressed the pressing need for reform of the Security Council, while many others highlighted the critical importance of advancing disarmament. Those calls will no doubt be echoed in today's high-level plenary meeting at United Nations Headquarters to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

"In the area of human rights, Member States renewed their call for the promotion and protection of all human rights and for dedicated efforts towards the empowerment of women and girls. Member States emphasized the interrelationship between human rights, peace and sustainable development. Such linkages were also highlighted in the context of last Thursday's high-level meeting commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development. Some members also recalled the challenges related to intolerance and xenophobia and the continuing need to tackle all forms of discrimination.

"Last week we witnessed Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's final address in a general debate. His statement was a testimony both to the work he has done these past nine years and to the scale of the challenges his successor will face. The selection and appointment of that successor were addressed by almost every Member State. This is a matter that I will manage with great care over the coming months, in line with the principles of transparency and accountability and with a view to ensuring a smooth transition.

"This is but a synopsis of the many issues raised these past six days. Member States' engagement, and that of the many stakeholders that have joined us this week, demonstrates once again the unique nature of the general debate. It is the embodiment of the equality of nations and provides Member States with an opportunity to advance our collective pursuit of solutions to global challenges through dialogue and cooperation.

"At the same time, I am concerned that the standard of decorum during the general debate appears to be slipping, with high levels of noise in the Hall and its surrounds; with the allocated speaking time often ignored; with low attendance by delegations as the debate progresses; and with the proliferation of mandated and other events happening simultaneously with the general debate. I will therefore encourage the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly to consider that matter during the seventy-first session.

"To conclude, let me express my sincere appreciation to all of the staff of the United Nations — the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the interpreters, security officers, protocol, maintenance staff and others — for their professionalism throughout. Allow me to thank Member States for their kind words of personal congratulations and support. I look forward to representing each and every one to the best of my ability during the seventy-first session."

Several delegations have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind representatives that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Horoi (Solomon Islands): Solomon Islands would like to exercise its right of reply to the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on 24 September, regarding the ongoing human rights violations of the Melanesian people in West Papua (see A/71/PV.21).

Solomon Islands notes Indonesia's right of reply regarding the efforts made by the Indonesian Government to establish human rights monitoring mechanisms and other avenues to ensure that human rights violations in West Papua are addressed. We note that Indonesia ratified the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 1998, but to date it has not been able to harmonize the law to include the definition of torture, let alone to criminalize and punish torture. Moreover, Indonesia has not submitted its periodic report to the Committee against Torture since 2008.

The Solomon Islands delegation receives reports from respective sources of fellow States Members of the United Nations and moral leaders from civil society, illustrating a lack of protection of the human rights of the Melanesian people of West Papua. In that regard, Solomon Islands therefore invites Indonesia to substantiate its allegations that the Solomon Islands, together with the five other Pacific Island delegations, have used false and fabricated information by allowing United Nations Special Rapporteurs mandated by the Human Rights Council to visit West Papua and Papua.

Our concern has to do with the increasing loss of lives at the hands of Indonesia authorities. We may argue and concede that mistakes are made and that lives are lost as a consequence, but how can we, as members of this body — the defender of human rights and the body of reference in ethical and moral values — turn a blind eye to the deaths of more than 500,000 West Papuans over the course of the past 50 years?

As an island country in the region that Indonesia claims to be a part of, Solomon Islands cannot stand behind the argument of sovereignty and integrity of any country and watch such atrocities take place. It is our moral and ethical duty, as members of this gathering, to bring this unfortunate reality to the fore and to find a way together to stop the loss of lives and protect the rights of all human beings, be they Melanesians, West Papuans or any other.

Furthermore, we come together to agree on certain rights and hold each other accountable to those rights. Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates that "[e]veryone has the right to life, liberty and security of person". Indonesia has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which is also a binding legal instrument. Article 9 of the Covenant reinforces the right to liberty and security of person. Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights entails a responsibility to protect all populations from mass atrocities, crimes and human rights violations.

In essence, we uphold the argument of sovereignty and national integrity. We, as States Members of the United Nations, should also hold other Member States accountable under article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Indonesia has further clarified the many development challenges faced by the Solomon Islands. Such is the case with the five other Pacific Island States that were mentioned by the representative of Indonesia in his right of reply. Earlier in this meeting, the representative of Palau indicated that our challenges are difficult ones and we know full well that we alone cannot and will not be able to resolve them. That is why we highlight those challenges before this body.

In a similar vein, we highlight the human rights violations in West Papua because we realize that neither we nor Indonesia can resolve that matter alone. We are of the position that the matter needs to be brought to the attention of a United Nations body. It needs to be done urgently as lives are being lost, in all impunity. All lives matter. West Papuan lives matter. Solomon Islands wishes to reiterate its willingness to engage constructively with Indonesia on the matter of West Papua. In fact, our Pacific regional and subregional bodies have indicated their willingness to discuss these matters with Indonesia, as we are all concerned about the increasing loss of life in West Papua.

Over the past 20 years, our Pacific island countries have expressed the need for dialogue with Indonesia over human rights violations. Over the past 18 months, the regional and subregional organizations of the Pacific island countries have made three attempts to engage constructively with Indonesia. Indonesia's lack of will to engage will not dampen the commitment of Solomon Islands, together with six other Pacific Island countries, to pursue dialogue and constructive engagement, which are the only means of resolving this matter. We understand that through constructive engagement and dialogue we can realize the Articles of the Charter of the United Nations and the subsequent international human rights instruments that Indonesia has ratified.

In closing, the Solomon Islands welcomes the opportunity to highlight this case before the Assembly so that, together as a family of nations, we can — and we must — address the human rights violations and loss of lives in West Papua. It impinges on us, as States Members of the United Nations, to cast aside all barriers so that further lives are not lost in West Papua. We are here to enable the divine purpose of the universe to unfold, for life is sacred.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): The Pakistan delegation is obliged to respond to the statement made by the Foreign Minister of India earlier today.

Her statement is a litany of falsehoods about my country and a travesty of facts and history that reflects only the deceit and hostility of her Government towards Pakistan. We reject all the baseless allegations made in that statement. These allegations are designed principally to deflect global attention away from the brutalities being perpetrated by India's occupation force of over half a million troops against innocent and unarmed Kashmiri children, women and men in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Their call for freedom has been met with characteristic Indian brutality.

During the past two and a half months, over 100 innocent Kashmiris — including infants, children, women and men — have been killed, hundreds blinded and thousands injured by Indian bullets and pellets. This is the worst form of State terrorism — a war crime that India has continued to perpetrate in the situation of foreign occupation in Jammu and Kashmir for the past many decades. Pakistan demands a full and impartial investigation of these Indian atrocities and massive human rights violations in Kashmir. We ask that India accept the investigation proposed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and allow it unfettered access for this purpose.

Jammu and Kashmir never was and never can be an integral part of India. It is disputed territory, the final status of which has yet to be determined in accordance with several resolutions of the Security Council. The right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination has been recognized and promised to them by the Security Council, India and Pakistan. For 70 years India, through force and fraud, has prevented the Kashmiris from exercising this right and from holding the United Nations-supervised plebiscite set to enable the Kashmiris to determine their political destiny. The struggle of the Kashmiri people for self-determination is a legitimate one, and they have the right to receive the moral and political support of the international community.

The attack on the Indian army base in Uri, particularly its timing, has all the hallmarks of an

operation designed to divert attention from India's atrocities in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The international community is well aware that several similar incidents have been staged in the past to serve India's tactical and propaganda objectives. India is utilizing the Uri incident to blame Pakistan for the current Kashmiri uprising and to divert attention from its brutal occupation. India's Government is delusional if it believes that it can isolate any country. It is India itself which, because of its war crimes and warmongering in Kashmir and elsewhere, is likely to be isolated within the international community.

It is India that has long been a sponsor and practitioner of State terrorism. Over the course of the past half-century, India has sponsored and perpetrated terrorism and aggression against all its neighbours, creating terrorist groups, destabilizing and blockading neighbours to do its strategic bidding, and sponsoring subversion, sabotage and terrorism in various parts of my country. The recently captured Indian spy, intelligence officer Kulbhushan Yadav, has confessed to India's support of such terrorist and subversive activities, particularly in the province of Balochistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Indeed, it was Kulbhushan who was financing, arming and supporting individuals and entities listed under the United Nations sanctions regime. India's policy of interference in Pakistan, especially its attempt to destabilize Balochistan, is now a matter of record. This is a blatant violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Instead of aiming to destabilize Pakistan, the Indian Government would do well to address India's own vast internal problems and the dozen or so insurgencies occurring in its own country. For the Indian Foreign Minister to claim that her country has imposed no preconditions for talks with Pakistan is yet another falsehood. It was India that suspended talks with Pakistan more than a year ago. It is India that has refused to resume them despite repeated offers from Pakistan and advice from the international community. The latest offer for talks was made by the Prime Minister of Pakistan from the rostrum of the General Assembly.

Let us be clear that talks are no favour to Pakistan. They are in the interests of both Pakistan and India, and the people of both countries. Let me reiterate that Pakistan is ready and willing for serious and result-oriented talks with India, with regard in particular to resolve the outstanding dispute of Jammu and Kashmir, which is imperative for durable peace in our region.

Ms. Gambhir (India): In yet another attempt to divert our attention from her country's continued sponsorship of terorrism, today we have heard the Permanent Representative of Pakistan make a fanciful and misleading presentation on the situation in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir. At the same time, we did not see any attempt by her to answer questions that have been posed repeatedly by the international community to Pakistan.

Can the representative of Pakistan clarify how it is that terror sanctuaries and safe havens in her country continue to flourish despite the Pakistan Army's much-vaunted counter-terrorism operations and the billions of dollars of international counter-terrorism aid it receives? Can the representative of Pakistan confirm that her country does not use terrorist proxies and export terrorism as a matter of State policy? Can the representative of Pakistan deny that Pakistan, in 2004, assured that it would not allow any territories under its control to be used for terror attacks against India? Can the representative of Pakistan deny that Pakistan has failed to honour the aforementioned assurance, which was given at the highest level?

We have heard today the views of a dysfunctional State that inflicts atrocity after atrocity upon its own people while preaching the values of tolerance, democracy and human rights. We reject these sermons entirely. On the other hand, will the representative of Pakistan deny that the armed forces of her country committed one of the most extensive and heinous genocides in human history in 1971? Will the representative of Pakistan deny that her country's armed forces have repeatedly used air strikes and artillery against its own people? Will the representative of Pakistan explain why Pakistani civil society is being silenced by the plethora of heavily armed militias that go by such names such as "*Jaish*", meaning "army"; "*Lashkar*", meaning "army; "*Sipah*", meaning "soldiers"; and "*Harkat*", meaning "armed movement"?

Finally, it appears that the Representative of Pakistan did not hear clearly what our Minister of External Affairs stated during her address earlier today: "The State of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and will always remain so". We hope that the message is loud and clear.

Mr. Skinner-Klée (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to exercise our right of reply to the statement delivered by the Foreign Minister of Belize in reference to the territorial, maritime and island dispute with my country and recent occurrences in the context of a 150-year-old conflict. We listened carefully but in disbelief to the Foreign Minister's remarks, which contained untrue statements.

First, we reiterate our commitment to peace and to a permanent and definitive resolution before the International Court of Justice of a territorial dispute that both countries inherited. As was stated in this forum by the President of the Republic of Guatemala, Mr. Jimmy Morales (see A/71/PV.15), we hope to enjoy a privileged relationship with Belize and an ongoing dialogue with a view to resolving our shared problems.

Guatemala is a founding Member of the Organization, and throughout its membership has never resorted to the use or threat of use of force, just as we have never committed any act against the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. To the contrary, we have sought a peaceful resolution, in accordance with the principles of justice and international law, to the dispute that we have enduredfor more than a century and half. For more than 120 years, Guatemala has done the impossible to reach a peaceful and mutually beneficial resolution — through direct negotiations, mediation and good offices, among other measures — to the issue of its usurped territory. However, the colonizing Power took advantage of our good faith by unilaterally granting independence to Belize in 1981, which once again was contrary to agreements made.

Notwithstanding the abuse and plundering Guatemala has suffered, we recognized the right to self-determination of the people of Belize and their independence, but we maintained our legitimate claim to our historic rights over part of their territory. Guatemala has always sought through peaceful means a just, honourable and lasting peace in the name of the rights that were taken from us by invasion, force and deceit. We recognize the existence of the State of Belize, but we have not renounced our rights, just as we have not resorted to violent acts against authorities or citizens of our brother country.

Today we are witnessing another kind of violence — deplorable behaviour that contravenes the bonds of friendship that should govern relations among nations, as prescribed by Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations. This is an obligation that should be fulfilled in good faith in order to reach a peaceful resolution to our territorial, maritime and island dispute, as also provided for in Article 2 of the Charter.

Despite the purposes and principles of the Charter, over the past decade the lives of defenceless Guatemalan farmers have been taken by Belizean arms; their only mistake was to come upon areas under Belizean administration. These are people who never posed a threat to the security of Belize. Such grave acts of irrationality and provocation are unjustifiable and constitute hostile acts that violate the most basic rules of coexistence, and a moral delinquency that jeopardizes intentional peace and security, causing outrage among a people who long for peace and call for justice and decent treatment.

These violent deaths — including the latest, a 14-year-old boy who died at the hands of irregular armed forces accompanying the so-called Belize Defence Force— have all gone unpunished. These are barbaric acts that are fundamentally hostile and contradict both the spirit of the Charter and the inevitable need to promote harmonious and mutually beneficial relations. Moreover, they demonstrate irrational behaviour that is not legally justifiable.

The expert report to which the Foreign Minister of Belize referred does not exonerate Belize, but indicates that the shots leading to the death of the boy, Julio René Alvarado, were from .22 and .12 calibre weapons. Members of the Belizean non-governmental organization Friends for Conservation and Development, which was in a joint patrol under the command of the so-called Belize Defence Force, were carrying those same types of weapons. Although Guatemala did not object to the credentials of the experts, it rejects the content of the report due to the inconsistencies presented and the fact that there is no documentation of scientific support and its only backing is the statements of people who were directly involved in the tragic events of the fateful night of 20 April. This is precisely why such statements have no merit whatsoever.

It is irresponsible to claim that elements of the Guatemalan Armed Forces helped certain citizens to illegally enter Belize at the place where the incident occurred so as to destroy evidence that would have been helpful to the investigation. Furthermore, it shows that Belize did not guard the crime scene, much

less the chain of custody of the evidence. Belize was responsible for such tasks, given that the incidents took place in territory administered by that country, thereby naturally compromising the investigation and its results. Whether or not the boy had been detained, the excessive use of force by the joint patrol of Belize was no more justified than the six bullet wounds in the boy's back or the two lethal shots in the back of his neck. Similarly, none of the deaths of 10 Guatemalan farmers in the Adjacency Zone administered by Belize was in any way justifiable.

Regarding the policeman Daniel Conorquie, who died in 2014 in the archaeological site known as Caracol, and the injuries suffered by Staff Sergeant Richard Lambey in 2016, these acts were committed by people that entered into Belize from Guatemala. As affirmed by Foreign Minister Elrington, that does not mean or prove that the people who perpetrated such acts are citizens of my country; this is information that still has to be investigated.

Guatemala has been patient and conciliatory. For more than 150 years, we have had to tolerate the threat, seizure and treachery of the imperialist Power, to which must be added the present violence and false accusation by those who are playing the victim when really they are the aggressors. The unauthorized presence of people does not and never will justify the disproportionate and lethal use of weapons, for any reason whatsoever.

We regret having to resort to this forum for the first time to denounce insidious behaviour that obscures the reality of the situation. We will continue to seek in good faith a solution to our rights in a civilized manner, guided by the pressing need to find practical solutions to our shared problems. We will be unrelenting in our efforts to find a fair solution to this historic dispute, just as we refuse to abandon our citizens. Rather, we will continue our pursuit of an understanding with a view to promoting the common good and the privilege of living in peace and harmony.

In that regard, Guatemala will shortly adhere to the Protocol to the Special Agreement that governs the simultaneous negotiations, thereby reaffirming our resolve to submit our territorial, maritime and island dispute to the International Court of Justice, the supreme body that can and must resolve this age-old problem so as to avoid further violent acts that will only harm both nations.

Mr. Yazdani (Iran): I am obliged to take the floor in exercise of the right of reply.

The Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates, in his address to the General Assembly on Saturday (see A/71/PV.21), reported a number of baseless and absurd fabrications against my Government. Those same targeted accusations have also been levelled by the same and other United Arab Emirates officials on other occasions, but no effort has ever been made to substantiate them or to provide any proof to support them. They are flatly wrong in their thinking that repetition may make a claim credible. Conversely, repetition makes baseless claims tedious and repulsive.

It is absurd and hypocritical for the official of a country whose jet fighters are bombing innocent civilians in Yemen to accuse Iran of interfering in the domestic affairs of other countries. It is also farcical to witness a regime that, along with certain other accomplices, has been exporting a host of extremist takfiri ideologies for decades, as well as funding and arming terrorists in Iraq, Syria and many other places, take the floor just to accuse Iran of attempting to destabilize the region.

The Emirates official once again assaulted Iran's territorial integrity by repeating a baseless claim to Iran's three islands in the Persian Gulf. We have always rejected that falsehood and reiterated that those islands have been and continue to be part of Iranian territory. No claim, no matter how many times it is repeated, will be able in any way to dent or undermine our resolve to refute such claims.

Moreover, taken together with the American and Israeli representatives' statements in the Assembly, we may better understand the remark in the Israeli statement concerning increasing understanding between the Israeli regime and certain regimes in the region. In that light, we can understand that the focus of the United Arab Emirates statement on Iran and Iran's three islands is not a pure coincidence. A review of those two statements clearly shows how the two respective regimes have come together and how the United Arab Emirates and a few of its partners in the Persian Gulf are now uniting with the Israelis — a coalition that could only be tantamount to betraying the Palestinian people.

The United Arab Emirates official also referred to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or, as he put it, the so-called nuclear agreement. We know

that the United Arab Emirates and some of its partners in the Persian Gulf region did everything in their power to impede the road to that deal, to no avail. We know that after the fruition of the JCPOA, they escalated their provocation against Iran to compensate for the détente that the deal brought about. It is unfortunate that our efforts to reduce tension in the region are not reciprocated by them and that they continue to incite more tension in the region.

Allow me to also refer briefly to the statement made today by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, who also repeated the false claim of Iran's so-called intervention in Bahrain's domestic affairs, which is an obvious lie. Suffice it to remind him of the report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, set up by the Bahraini Government. The Commission's report, known as the Bassiouni report, reads in part:

> "The evidence presented to the Commission in relation to the involvement of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the internal affairs of Bahrain does not establish a discernible link between specific incidents that occurred in Bahrain...and the Islamic Republic of Iran".

He also referred at length to the Mina disaster of September 2015 and levelled criticism against Iran, which we reject. With regard to that incident, while the precious lives of approximately 500 Iranian pilgrims perished in the disaster, we rightly expected the Saudis to adopt a responsible approach, which has never been the case up to now. We note with concern that no findings from the local investigations of the tragedy, if any, have yet to be released. Our legitimate request for a thorough, transparent and independent investigation into the causes of the tragedy, through a committee in which the representatives of the affected countries could participate, has so far fallen on deaf ears. We note that the flawed management of the hajj pilgrimage has caused numerous deadly accidents. Therefore, we believe that effective action should be taken to redress the situation.

A few speakers also used false and incorrect terms to denote the Persian Gulf. We remind them that the traditional term "Persian Gulf" has been the correct appellation for that body of water since 500 years before Christ and will remain so forever. It is a standardized geographic term, recognized by the international community, including the United Nations, and should not be tinkered with due to political projects or the daily wishes of this or that ruler.

Last but not least, we have always endeavoured towards the removal of tension in our region and developing friendly and good-neighbourly relations with our neighbours, including those in the Persian Gulf. We once more reiterate our interest in, and call for, dialogue with a view to dispelling misunderstandings and restoring friendly relations that our people have mostly enjoyed throughout history.

Ms. Rakhmatia (Indonesia): I am compelled to take the floor again in exercise of our right of reply, due to the response of the delegation of Solomon Islands.

The remarks delivered earlier by the representative of Solomon Islands show the use of allegations of human rights violations to support the separatist movement, and only reaffirm the persistent violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations by blatantly interfering in the affairs, sovereignty and territorial integrity of other nations. It also demonstrates that country's representatives' continuing ignorance of the facts on the ground and how they have fallen into the trap of believing trash information peddled by separatist groups.

Mr. Munir (Pakistan): We have been forced to take the floor again to respond to the Indian delegation's continued desire to express falsehoods and fabrications. We reject all delusional and false claims and assertions by the representative of India. Irrespective of how many times one repeats a lie, it can never replace the truth. The Indian representative seems to have become a victim of her own lies and propaganda.

The facts of the matter have not changed. Jammu and Kashmir remains an internationally recognized disputed territory. It is a travesty of justice and morality to stand here in the General Assembly Hall and make claims that are against the principles of international law. Indian State-sponsored terrorism continues in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Indian occupation forces are decimating the fundamental human rights of the hapless Kashmiris and committing a crime against humanity. Indian involvement in sabotage and subversive activities in Pakistan is a well-documented fact. Pakistan's commitment to fighting terrorism is recognized internationally.

Lastly, I would reiterate that it seems India has not heard the voice of the innocent Kashmiri people. They

do not want to live under occupation. They have been saying that for 70 years, but India only tries to repress that unanimous voice. I hope India will wake up to the reality.

Ms. Gambhir (India): We have patiently listened to our colleague from Pakistan. He has chosen yet again to stay silent on the tough questions. That is what we have come to expect from Pakistan — deception, deceit and denial. The world still awaits their response.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 8?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I wish to announce that this is the last meeting of the General Assembly for Ms. Emma Pioche, Conference Officer in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. Ms. Pioche, seen by all and known to many, has worked at the United Nations for 36 years, a majority of which have been associated with the work of the General Assembly plenary. Her contribution to the smooth running of Assembly meetings has been truly significant, and I would like the Assembly to give her a round of applause in appreciation. We wish her all the best.

The meeting rose at 2.35 p.m.

United Nations A/71/PV.23

General Assembly

Seventy-first session

Official Records

23rd plenary meeting
Monday, 3 October 2016, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Agenda item 138

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/71/414)

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, may I take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee that is before the Assembly today?

It was so decided.

The President: Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee (A/71/414), I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 71/2).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 138.

Election of the Chairs of the Main Committees

The President: Members will recall that for the seventy-first session, the President, the 21 Vice-Presidents and the Chairpersons of the First Committee, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee and the Second, Third and Sixth Committees were elected on 13 June. There remained the election of the Chairperson of the Fifth Committee, to take place at a later date.

I should now like to inform members that Her Excellency Ms. Inga Rhonda King of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was elected Chairperson of the Fifth Committee on 29 September and is accordingly a member of the General Committee for the seventy-first session. I congratulate the Chairperson of the Fifth Committee on her election.

The Chairpersons of the six Main Committees and the 21 Vice-Presidents having been elected, the General Committee of the General Assembly for the seventy-first session has thus been fully constituted in accordance with rule 38 of the rules of procedure.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.

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United Nations A/71/PV.24

General Assembly

Seventy-first session

Official Records

24th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 5 October 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Balé (Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 p.m.

Agenda item 109 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/71/1)

Mr. Pisarevich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/71/1) on the work of the Organization over the past year.

We have turned yet another important page in the history of the United Nations, as we have adopted a new Agenda for Sustainable Development for the next 15 years. Much remains to be done in order to ensure that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals is more successful than that of the Millennium Development Goals. In that regard, we agree with the Secretary-General's opinion that, in order to achieve the Goals by 2030, priority must be given to preventing and ending new and ongoing conflicts. In that context, an important role falls to preventive diplomacy and mediation.

A milestone last year was marked by the signing of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, in accordance with which States committed to laudable goals, which will contribute to building a healthier, safer and more prosperous future for us all. Indeed, much has been achieved during the reporting period. However, we should not forget that we have been compelled to undertake many of our activities because of short-sighted policies in the past and the failure to resolve issues in a timely matter, such as, for example, the recent massive displacement of refugees and migrants. Numerous negative events taking place today could have been avoided had the world been more stable and predictable.

Against the background of a number of important resolutions adopted by the United Nations, it must, unfortunately, be noted that the Organization has increasingly neglected the spirit of unity when initiatives are imposed on States that have been supported by only a few countries. That has consequently led to the violation of the provisions enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and a complete disregard for the sovereign rights of States. We are increasingly witness to unilateral interpretations of existing international law and codes of ethics. Unfortunately, the unilateral and non-transparent promotion of confrontational ideas has become characteristic of the Secretariat. The impartiality of the Secretariat is of critical importance if we wish to preserve the unity of the States Members of the United Nations.

In summing up the work of the United Nations over the past year, we must address vital internal matters relating to the Organization. It is no secret that, with regard to Headquarters and the organization of work and the logistics of the United Nations, the Secretariat is not always on the same page as Member States. The Secretariat has established many bureaucratic internal rules that often create obstacles to carrying out the work of the United Nations. Furthermore, very frequently,

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interaction takes place on a transactional basis: the Secretariat furnishes Member States services for which they have already paid through the salaries paid to Secretariat staff. We believe that additional funding of the United Nations is something that should be done only on a voluntary basis.

We believe that it is important to ensure that the Secretariat publish *The Journal of the United Nations* in all six official languages throughout any given session of the General Assembly. The issue is not one of purely technical importance. First and foremost, it is a matter of respecting the tradition of multilingualism in the Organization. In that regard, we would also like to direct the attention of the General Assembly to the role of translation and interpretation as a profession, art and tool for building trust and understanding among peoples. As a gesture of the importance that we attribute to that subject, we suggest establishing an international day for translation and interpretation.

Today more than ever, we need to learn how to work in partnership. Any action or innovation on the part of the Secretariat that affects the working conditions of the Missions of Member States at Headquarters needs to be coordinated with Member States. We believe that looking for effective forms of cooperation between the Secretariat and Member States must become a priority for the next Secretary-General. But we are even more concerned by the trend leading to the excessive bureaucratization of our work as Member States. Given the complexity and breadth of the United Nations, carrying out our work would not be possible without a minimum number of rules. However, real-time action carried out by the Organization for the benefit of the well-being of countries and peoples should not be held hostage to formal and bureaucratic procedures, especially when development depends upon it.

Belarus and many other countries have therefore been viewing with concern the fact that at the onset of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, our joint plan of action is already being held hostage by routine and pro forma approaches. Instead of practically implementing the ideas in the Agenda, we are now engrossed in optimizing, synchronizing and compiling reports and resolutions. We will therefore not only fail to achieve the sustainable and equitable development of peoples and countries, but will also risk worsening the image of the United Nations as a bureaucratic mechanism far removed from the needs of the world's population.

Of course, the Organization alone cannot solve issues involving sustainable development for national Governments. But the United Nations must be the global coordinating centre for dealing with questions of development. Belarus has already spoken in favour of ensuring that the United Nations become a focal coordinating centre, gathering resources in expert assistance, financing, technology and the means of implementation. For those countries truly in need of support in the implementation of the Agenda for Sustainable Development, that will be much more important than the formal approaches to work following the usual bureaucratic methods.

We also believe that the United Nations system needs to be better adapted to meeting the differing needs of countries in line with their national priorities. More than anyone else, national Governments know their countries' problems. The United Nations development system should therefore not decide a priori the question of what needs to be done. The development system must help States answer the question of how to achieve various results. Unfortunately, there is no universal formula for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, because countries have different needs and different ways of achieving them. We therefore expect the United Nations to concentrate more on unique approaches and problem-solving by taking into account the specific characteristics and peculiarities of each country.

We believe that the United Nations must finally pay more attention to middle-income countries. Two thirds of all the poor people in the world live in those countries, which also account for a significant number of young people, who are highly vulnerable to external economic challenges. Any change in the world economy runs the risk of undermining all those countries' efforts aimed at achieving sustainable development.

What is key to successfully overcoming current problems is to ensure that we prioritize the activities of the United Nations. Strengthening the United Nations does not imply only the internal reorganization of the Secretariat. It must involve pursuing the kind of United Nations policy that strives to reinstate the authority of the Organization and ensure that the world is helped through its decisions.

In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. Ban Ki-moon for his work as Secretary-General. We hope that the next Secretary-General will maintain

the positive traditions of the United Nations and continue guiding the United Nations family in a spirit of cooperation, mutual respect, healthy rationalism and real progress.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): We welcome the Secretary-General's annual report (A/71/1) on the work of the Organization, which provides a comprehensive account of the activities of the United Nations over the past year, as well as its accomplishments, and identifies challenges for the next year.

The founding fathers of the United Nations acknowledged the indivisibility of peace and security, on the one hand, and economic and social development, on the other — the immutable reality that there can be no peace without development and no development without peace. Last year, we made much progress towards the achievement of one of those pillars by collectively endorsing the transformative new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. That and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change marked significant and historic milestones. We are now entering the implementation phase. Together, we must deliver on the pledges that were made. We will be judged, after all, not by our intentions but by our actions.

Can we similarly be optimistic about our quest to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war? Turmoil in the Middle East; conflicts raging from Syria, Libya and Yemen to Afghanistan; tensions in and around Europe; the continued plight of people living under foreign occupation in Kashmir and Palestine; the unprecedented scale of suffering caused by human dislocation; the growing threat of violent extremism; the spread of intolerance and xenophobia; and the real threat to peace and security in my own neighbourhood are all indications not of what we have achieved, but of what still remains to be done in a world that is more fragile, yet more polarized. We have to ask ourselves, then, whether we have been able to live up to the promise and expectations generated by the Charter of the United Nations. Have we been able to move towards a fairer and more equitable and peaceful world, based on law and justice? After all, it is only by implementing the Charter in both letter and spirit that we can create a world free of conflict, where really no one is left behind.

Pakistan believes that, in our turbulent yet interdependent world, the United Nations continues to be indispensable to our efforts to restore order and ensure global peace, stability and prosperity. Its principles remain the crucial pillars for international legality, a guide for the conduct of Member States and the guarantor of the legitimate rights of all nations and peoples. But, in order for the United Nations to regain its credibility as the central instrument for promoting peace, prosperity and liberty, it must be more representative, transparent and accountable. For that reason, my country supports comprehensive and democratic reform of the Security Council, aimed at enhancing its relevance and representativeness without creating new centres of power and privilege.

The reviews conducted over the past year on peacekeeping, peacebuilding and resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, have shone a light not only on the Organization's achievements in those areas but also on the shortcomings that need to be addressed. We stand ready to take those processes forward during the seventy-first session. Pakistan's long-standing and unwavering commitment to United Nations peacekeeping has been acknowledged by everyone, and we have a significant stake in the success of that flagship enterprise. Arguably the most important message to emerge from the reviews is the need for prevention and mediation in managing conflicts and the need to stop them from occurring in the first place. Increasing the capacity of the United Nations in those areas is therefore imperative. And yet we see India continuing to reject the offer of the Secretary-General's good offices aimed at resolving long-standing disputes in our region.

The terrorist threat has become more pervasive and is evolving in complex and unpredictable directions, posing an ever greater danger to international peace and security. Countering terrorist entities such as Da'esh is possible only by ensuring international collaboration and reconciling the divergent interests of the regional and external Powers in the Middle East. Pakistan has been at the forefront of the global campaign against terrorism. We have lost tens of thousands of lives in that fight. The blood that has been shed, including that of our innocent children, has only strengthened our resolve to eliminate that scourge from our country. We will fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, whether sponsored by militant organizations or by hostile Powers in our region. We have made substantial gains, but our campaign will end only when the last terrorist is eliminated from our country.

The sovereign equality of States, the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means and

the avoidance of the use or threat of use of force are fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. It is those very principles that inspire us to look to the United Nations to play its appropriate role in promoting lasting peace in South Asia and live up to its long-standing obligations to the people of Kashmir. India's continued denial of the right of self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, promised in several Security Council resolutions, has sparked another indigenous and popular uprising in occupied Kashmir and has also led to tensions in the region. The struggle of the Kashmiri people for self-determination is a legitimate one, and they have the right to expect and receive moral and political support from the international community.

The United Nations is under an obligation to play a role in bringing an end to human rights abuses and facilitate a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute, in line with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people, through a free and fair plebiscite held under United Nations auspices. We reiterate our demand for an independent inquiry into human rights abuses in occupied Kashmir and welcome the call from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for unfettered and unconditional access in order to enable impartial monitoring of the human rights situation there. Sadly, India does not even allow the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan, one of the earliest missions ever deployed by the United Nations, to fully function in accordance with its mandate and report to the Security Council, so that it can address threats to international peace and security.

It is regrettable that by its recent declarations and actions, India has created conditions that pose a threat to peace and security in the region. Over the past few weeks India has engaged in unprovoked shelling across broad areas along the Line of Control. That continues even as I speak. Pakistan has exercised the greatest possible restraint in the face of such belligerence, because we know only too well that such a tense and fraught situation can easily spiral into uncontrolled escalation. Pakistan wants a peaceful resolution to all outstanding disputes, especially in Kashmir, where today a settlement is more urgently needed than ever. We stand ready to engage in a meaningful dialogue in the interest of all of the people of our region. But it is for India to take the first step, because it is India that has exacerbated the current situation.

Finally, we can address the daunting security and development challenges confronting the world today and achieve our shared goals only by strict adherence to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The path to a more peaceful, just and prosperous world lies in cooperative endeavours promoted through effective multilateralism, to which my country remains fully and firmly committed.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's report (A/71/1) on the work of the Organization. Over the past year, in the face of a very complex international situation and global challenges, the United Nations has promoted multilateral cooperation and made outstanding progress in the areas of peace and security, development, women's empowerment, climate change, and migration and refugees, public health and counter-terrorism. The efforts of the United Nations over the past year have therefore focused on global trends and on supporting the interests of Member States. China commends Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Secretariat for their work in that regard, and would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his efforts.

Today, even as one or another regional conflict or hotspot subsides, others appear, and traditional and non-traditional security threats become intertwined. Globally, economic recovery continues to be weak and lacking in the momentum needed for sustainable development. During the current session of the General Assembly, the international community should therefore focus its efforts on building a community of common destinyfor humankind and coordinate its actions in order to address our global challenges.

First, we must adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in order to create a global climate conducive to peace and stability. We must uphold the spirit of the Charter and nurture a new concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security and promote a global partnership that features dialogue instead of confrontation as well as partnership instead of alliance. We should stay committed to settling regional hotspot issues through political means, make further efforts in conflict prevention and other areas, strongly uphold the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, actively promote international counter-terrorism cooperation, and develop synergies in the area of maintaining international peace and security.

Secondly, we should step up our contributions to development and further promote international development cooperation. The international community's first priority should be to put an end to hunger and poverty, and to that end Member States should combine their efforts and work to achieve comprehensive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. North-South cooperation should be maintained as a main channel. Developed countries should make good on their official development assistance commitments to help developing nations improve their people's livelihood and accelerate their development, while developing countries should further promote South-South Cooperation and make efforts to achieve collective self-sufficiency.

Thirdly, greater priority must be given to international cooperation and proper measures must be taken to tackle global challenges. On the issue of refugees, we must first ensure that refugees are provided with the basic necessities of life. Of fundamental importance is to eliminate the cause of war and restart development so as to address the root causes of the issue. With regard to public health security, the international community should support the countries concerned in their efforts to establish public health emergency response and management mechanisms, improve grass-roots prevention and control systems, enhance prevention awareness among the general public. Regarding climate change, Member States must adhere to the principle of shared but differentiated responsibility, equity and respective capabilities, jointly deal with climate change and push for the universal acceptance and early entry into force of the Paris Agreement.

In his address to the General Assembly as it marked the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations (see A/70/PV.13), China's President Xi Jinping discussed the importance of fashioning a new kind of international relations based on win-win cooperation and made important proposals regarding support for the United Nations. Those measures are being implemented. At the Group of 20 Summit meeting held recently in Hangzhou, participants reached the Hangzhou consensus on global economic development. A blueprint was drawn for building an innovative, invigorated, interconnected and inclusive world economy. Participants pledged to actively implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and formulate an action plan for it, thereby bringing new vigor to sustainable development efforts around the world.

During the general debate in the Assembly at its seventy-first session, the Chinese Premier, Li Keqiang, stated (see A/71/PV.11) that China ready to take an active part in international cooperation and support an even greater role of the United Nations in the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. China will continue to strenghen its cooperation with the developing countries and will do whatever it can to help African countries and the least developed countries.

As a permanent member of the Security Council and the world's largest developing country, China is a builder of world peace, a contributor to global development and a defender of and a defender of the international order. We have made significant contributions to the maintenance of international peace and the promotion of common development, and are ready to cooperate with the great majority of Member States, firmly practice multilateralism, uphold the principles and purposes pf the Charter of the United Nations and promote an even greater role for the Organization in international affairs, with a view to advancing the cause of peace, development and progress for all humankind.

Mr. Phansourivong (Lao People's Democratic Republic): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

I wish to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his comprehensive annual report (A/71/1) on the work of the Organization, which provides a detailed overview of the activities, achievements and challenges of the United Nations on a wide range of issues of common interest and concern to all humankind. As this is Mr. Ban Ki-moon's last year as Secretary-General, I also wish to congratulate him and thank him for his tireless efforts over the past 10 years to promote peace, development and human rights in the world. I hope that his successor will continue his good work.

On 31 December 2015, ASEAN marked one of the most significant events in its history as it reached a key milestone in its community-building efforts by establishing the ASEAN Community. Next year, in 2017, ASEAN will turn 50, an important occasion that its member States will mark with pride and joy. As an outward-looking intergovernmental regional organization, ASEAN continues to consider the work

of the United Nations very important and greatly values its cooperation with the Organization. Among other examples of that link, the ASEAN Charter has a provision expressing its commitment to upholding the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Furthermore, the convening of the annual ASEAN-United Nations Summit, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' meeting with the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, the implementation of the just-completed 2014-2015 ASEAN-United Nations work plan, and the adoption of a 2016-2020 plan of action to implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations all clearly reflect ASEAN's commitment to strengthening its cooperation with the United Nations.

We are very grateful for the Secretary-General's participation in the recent eighth ASEAN-United Nations Summit, held on 7 September in Vientiane, and the annual meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers with the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, held on 22 September on the sidelines of the general debate of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly here at Headquarters. In the light of that, ASEAN will submit a draft of the biennial resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and ASEAN" to the Assembly at its current session, so as to identify areas of cooperation and help address the challenges that Member States face in areas such as sustainable development, poverty, climate change, peace and security, human rights, the rule of law, disarmament and terrorism. I therefore look forward to continued support for, and sponsorship of, the draft resolution from all Members of the United Nations.

In his report, the Secretary-General highlights the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals, the need for the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — the framework for global development for the next 15 years — and the promise made by Member States to leave no one behind. ASEAN also believes in the importance of sustainable development in helping to secure a rule-based, people-centred ASEAN community, as envisioned in ASEAN's Community Vision 2025, guided by the purposes and principles of the ASEAN Charter, which will serve as a solid foundation for ensuring peace, stability and prosperity in the region and for emphasizing the complementarity between the implementation of both the 2030 Agenda and ASEAN's Community Vision 2025, with the goal of raising our people's standards of living so that no one is left behind.

ASEAN is also striving for inclusive and sustained growth. Consisting as it does of 10 countries with varying levels of development, ASEAN has been making efforts to narrow the development gap among its members through its successive Initiatives for ASEAN Integration Work Plans, currently at the beginning of their third phase with the recent adoption of Work Plan III. I therefore welcome the continued support of our dialogue partners, the United Nations and other external partners in our efforts to strengthen the ASEAN Community, which was established on 31 December 2015.

The Secretary-General pointed out that climate change poses a challenge to the achievement of sustainable development and the eradication of extreme poverty. In that regard, ASEAN welcomes the signing and ratification of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change by Member States and the beginning of work on the modalities, procedures and guidelines for its implementation. In addition, ASEAN is committed to improving the management of ASEAN's diverse ecosystems and landscapes, including its vulnerable terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems, through a landscape-based approach aimed at building climate resilience.

On human rights, ASEAN has made progress in its institutional development since the entry into force of its Charter. Some highlights include the milestone adoption of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration in 2012 and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Children in ASEAN in 2013, following the establishment of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children.

The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights has conducted various programmes and activities in consultation and cooperation with ASEAN sectoral bodies and with the relevant institutions and external partners concerned to promote human rights awareness in 2016. They include the second Regional Dialogue on the Mainstreaming of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the ASEAN Community, held in Thailand, the Workshop on Effective Communication Strategies to Combat Trafficking in Persons, held

in Viet Nam, and the Regional Forum on Media and Human Rights in ASEAN, held in Malaysia.

In order to enhance humanitarian assistance efforts in the region, during the chairmanship of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in 2016, our leaders adopted the ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region at the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth ASEAN Summits.

On peace and stability, ASEAN is also striving to maintain and promote the Association as a flag-bearer for regional norms of good conduct, particularly through the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia. The Treaty is regarded as the key code of conduct governing inter-State relations in South-East Asia, which provides a foundation for the maintenance of regional peace and stability. We welcome other non-regional States' growing interest in acceding to the Treaty. In that regard, we welcome the recent accessions of Chile, Egypt and Morocco to the Treaty on 6 September 2016 in Vientiane and look forward to Iran's accession to the Treaty upon the completion of its internal processes.

Furthermore, ASEAN attaches great importance to strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime so as to maintain and promote peace, security and prosperity in the region. We are committed to preserving South-East Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone and free of all other weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and the ASEAN Charter. ASEAN also welcomed the biennial adoption of the General Assembly resolution on that Treaty in December 2015 during its seventieth session, which reiterates the importance of the Treaty in strengthening the security of States in the region and in contributing to international peace and security.

On countering terrorism, ASEAN shares the deep concerns over the increasing violence and brutality committed by terrorist and extremist organizations and radical groups in Yemen, Iraq and Syria. ASEAN denounces all acts of destruction, violence and terror in all its forms and manifestations. In line with those efforts, ASEAN adopted the Langkawi Declaration on the Global Movement of Moderates at the twenty-sixth ASEAN Summit in April 2015, which outlines measures to promote moderation and curb extremism throughout the region.

ASEAN leaders announced the establishment of the ASEAN Community on 31 December 2015 and adopted the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and its three blueprints at the twenty-seventh ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur. Under the chairmanship of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in 2016, "Turning Vision into Reality for a Dynamic ASEAN Community" was chosen as the theme.

We believe that ASEAN's collective efforts at the regional level will contribute to the work of the United Nations in promoting peace, security and stability, as well as in contributing to inclusive and sustained growth for all. I wish to conclude by reiterating ASEAN's resolve to strengthen cooperation with the United Nations in all areas of mutual interest.

Mr. Khoshroo (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to begin by thanking Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his report (A/71/1) on the work of the Organization.

I would like to touch briefly on some of the issues that we find noteworthy in the report. In paragraph 97 of his report, the Secretary-General welcomes the adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, also known as the Iran Nuclear Deal, in the following way:

> "This historic accomplishment — a testament to the value of diplomacy — marks an important turning point in the international community's relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran and benefits nuclear non-proliferation. I am confident that this agreement will lead to greater mutual understanding and cooperation on the many serious security challenges in the region and beyond."

While we thank the Secretary-General for that realistic assessment of the value of the agreement and its positive impact on our region and beyond, we invite the Secretariat to do its share by taking a more constructive and positive approach in fulfilling its reporting and monitoring functions. In our view, our full compliance with the terms of the agreement and the non-performance by certain Plan of Action participants should be duly reflected in the reports by the Secretariat on the implementation of the agreement.

Also, on the issue of disarmament, we reiterate that the priorities of the international community have not changed. Achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament is the highest priority. However, as the Secretary-General indicated in his report, the state

of affairs is disappointing in that regard. As a result of nuclear-weapon States persistently not complying with their obligations, there has been no progress towards that objective. We are deeply concerned about that dangerous situation and its consequences for international peace and security. There are thousands of nuclear weapons that threaten to annihilate humankind by accident, miscalculation or madness. The only absolute guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. We call on the nuclear-weapon States to honour their special responsibility and legal obligations relating to the total elimination of their nuclear weapons.

As the main sponsor of the General Assembly draft resolution entitled "A world against violence and violent extremism", we welcome the initiative by the Secretary-General to develop a plan of action aimed at preventing violent extremism. We think that it is an important document, and that it could form the basis for further negotiations aimed at finalizing a plan of action that all Member States would implement.

On the issue of human rights, we note the efforts by the Secretary-General and the Organization to further advance human rights and fundamental freedoms. However, the Secretariat should avoid trying to devise principles or set priorities and agendas that Member States have not agreed to. In that regard, we register our disagreement with the analysis presented in paragraph 77 of document A/71/1 concerning the death penalty, and with the status attributed to the doctrine of "responsibility to protect" in paragraph 76.

On the issue of peacekeeping operations, the prerequisite for the success of the United Nations in discharging its responsibilities, including in peacekeeping, clearly lies in the partnership and cooperation of Member States with the United Nations and their contribution to the various activities of the Organization. In that regard, we believe that the United Nations should be able to use the potential capacity of the whole membership in peacekeeping operations, including troop, military, police and civilian contingents. Therefore, the base of contributors should be broadened, and, to that end, any invitation by the United Nations requesting the contributions of Member States to the peacekeeping missions or special political missions should be transparent and include all potential contributing countries.

On the issue of sustainable development, as stated in the report, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is built on the lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed commitments and on their expansion. One lesson learned from the MDGs was that deviating from a commitment to partnership could lead to underachievement. We must keep international cooperation on the right track, especially in the first year of implementing the 2030 Agenda, which requires full and effective international support and solidarity.

As Member States have started implementing the 2030 Agenda, a strong and more dynamic United Nations development system, compatible with their needs and priorities, is of much significance. In that context, the forthcoming draft resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review should appropriately address a number of important issues, including the existing imbalance between core and non-core resources; the necessity of revitalizing governing bodies with equal participation and the presence of Member States; transparency, accountability and coherence; and exploring ways to avoid the overlapping of work across the United Nations agencies.

The world today faces greater risks, but we are also endowed with greater opportunities. Let us join hands for a better and brighter future.

Mr. Rivero Rosario (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the presentation of the annual report (A/71/1) of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization and the work undertaken to prepare it. This will be the last such report of the current Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize his dedication to promoting and protecting multilateralism, his contribution to international peace and security and his dedication to achieving a better world.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 were milestones in the history of the Organization, thus highlighting the importance of multilateralism and the continuing relevance of the United Nations and the purposes and principles set out in the Charter of the United Nations. However, a long path remains until we fulfil the agreed accords. We should not overlook the fact that obstacles are still impeding progress towards

achieving sustainable development for our peoples. We are confronting a world in which multilateralism is being challenged on a daily basis. We have war, aggression, soft coups and attempts at regime change promoted by some hegemonic nations, interference in the internal affairs of States and violations of national sovereignty under the pretext of combating terrorism.

Preventing armed conflict presents a larger challenge for the Organization than ever before. For Cuba, building upon the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and strengthening international law continue to be the basic pillars of international security. In essence, that requires full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, the non-use of force in international relations, and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

The international efforts being made to preserve future generations from the scourge of war, maintain international peace and security, and achieve economic and social progress and the full enjoyment of all fundamental human rights are still insufficient. That is attested to by the 795 million people who still suffer from hunger, the 781 million adults who are illiterate and the 17,000 children who die every day from curable diseases.

To effectively leave no one behind, we must change the current unjust and profoundly inequitable international order, and the United Nations must play an important role in that regard. We urgently need to end the application of unilateral coercive measures against developing countries, eliminate colonialism and foreign occupation, and reject interventionism disguised as humanitarian aid. We must end the political manipulation of human rights by ensuring that we have an impartial, objective and non-selective approach. The imposition of single and imperfect concepts of democracy, of models that ignore the particular characteristics of each society and give control to centres of world power, is unacceptable.

Cuba deems that a climate of international peace and security, where the rule of law is respected internationally, is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development. That requires the full recognition of the sovereign equality of States, the peaceful settlement of international disputes, respect for political independence and for the political, economic, social and cultural system that nations have freely chosen for themselves and the rejection of the threat or use of force against any State.

It is also vital to have new, additional and predictable financial resources for the implementation of the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals requires capacity-building and the establishment of an international mechanism that facilitates the transfer of environmentally friendly technologies, on favourable terms for developing countries.

Just as the report itself points out, last year was the worst in terms of climate change, with the increased melting of polar ice caps, rising sea levels and increasing emissions of greenhouse gases. Urgent concrete and immediate action must be taken to reverse that situation. The Paris Agreement constitutes a starting point, but it is not sufficient in itself if we want to preserve our planet for future generations. It is up to the industrialized nations to assume their environmental debt, change their irrational models of production and consumption and reduce their greenhouse-gas emissions.

The existence of nuclear weapons is a further threat to human beings. The only way to save humankind from the horrendous impact of nuclear weapons is through their complete prohibition and total elimination. Cuba is totally committed to the international efforts to achieve that priority objective. We support the recommendation to convene an international conference in 2017 for the purpose of negotiating a legally binding instrument for the prohibition of nuclear weapons, with a view to their elimination. We hope that such an instrument can be formally adopted in 2018 at the high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament that the General Assembly will convene.

We recognize that much remains to be done in the fight against terrorism. The international community must take specific steps towards adopting a comprehensive convention on international terrorism containing a full definition of that scourge. It is unacceptable that the alleged fight against terrorism should be used as a cover for acts of aggression and interference in the internal affairs of States or for perpetrating gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

The new genuinely just, democratic and equitable international order that we all wish to see requires a radically reformed United Nations. To make the United

Nations more democratic and effective, the General Assembly must be revitalized and strengthened. It must fully exercise its powers under the Charter, without any interference from the Security Council in its work or that of its bodies. The reform of the Security Council to make it more democratic and representative means that we must change its membership and working methods. We must not further postpone that task.

We are proud to belong to a zone of peace, as was proclaimed at the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Havana in January 2014. Cuba reiterates that the rules of coexistence based on friendship, cooperation and respect are vital in international relations among States and in ensuring the full enjoyment of the right to peace and development of their peoples.

Mr. Akbaruddin (India): Today we are about to select the ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations. The final report (A/71/1) of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the work of the Organization is therefore an appropriate inflection point for examining the main challenges that face us and the means and mechanisms to mend our problems. Those are not simple issues, nor are they small in number. However, because of the paucity of time, I will focus on just three examples relating to international peace and security that are emblematic of the problems we face.

In an increasingly interconnected world where we have seen the globalization of everything — from propaganda to violence, from technologies to cyberattacks, from terrorism to the ill effects of climate change, from conflicts to narco-networks — the response mechanisms that we have in place in the only global organization of our times are inadequate.

Let us begin with the principal organ tasked with the maintenance of international peace and security — the Security Council. So far this year it has met formally on approximately 180 occasions, and informally perhaps more than 400 times. Yet on cardinal issues, such as Syria, we see inaction; in other situations, such as resolution 2304 (2016), on South Sudan, action is agreed upon but not yet implemented; and, finally, where measures are taken, as in the case of resolution 2276 (2016), on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, they are disregarded.

In a variety of ways, therefore, the Council has become unresponsive to the needs of our time and ineffective in meeting the challenges it is confronted with. It is an organ that ponders for six months on whether to punish leaders of organizations it has itself designated as terrorist entities. Then, unable to decide, it gives itself three more months to further consider the issue. One has to expectantly wait throughout a nine-month process to know if Council members have decided on a single issue. In some instances it does not even begin that nine-month process of identifying and listing publicly announced leaders of terrorist entities. At best, it is now an organ that can be described as an interesting and random mix of "ad-hocism", scrambling and political paralysis. The global governance architecture calls for comprehensive reform.

Our public consciousness is being ravaged daily by incessant acts of terrorism targeting innocent people, our civilizational heritage and, increasingly, the socioeconomic infrastructure of our societies, especially in vulnerable developing countries.Yet on the issue of terrorism the United Nations has still to come up with a coherent policy, let alone take the lead on one of the biggest threats to global peace and security. As many as 31 entities within the United Nations system deal with some aspect of countering terrorism. We know the adage that too many cooks spoil the broth. That is clearly the case here, as coherence and coordination are missing. It is nearly impossible to argue the case of the relevance of the United Nations on the issue of terrorism, where even the adoption of an international norm on the prosecution or extradition of terrorists evades us despite 20 years of talk.

The inability to address what is among the most dangerous of scourges faced by States and societies collectively since the Second World War raises questions about the relevance of the Organization to the very lives of the people on whose behalf we are bound by the Charter to act. The choice of relevancy requires a willingness to address what is staring us in the face. Yet we look away. We look away as some among us stall their collective efforts while they use terrorists as proxies in their territorial quests.

Today, a short while ago, we again heard one such lone voice making claims to an integral part of my country. The voice comes from a country that has established itself as the global epicentre of terrorism. Such claims find no resonance among the international community. Less than 10 days ago, the General Assembly Hall witnessed the general debate. It also witnessed a singular lack of support for the

representative of Pakistan's baseless claims (see A/71/PV.11). Need one say more? Our response to Pakistan is consistent: it should abandon its futile quest. The State of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and will remain so. No amount of misuse of international platforms by Pakistan will change that reality. The sell-by date of Pakistan's anachronistic approach is long past.

Peacekeeping is the leitmotif of the United Nations. However, peacekeeping is under great stress. A plethora of tasks and Christmas-tree mandates without adequate funding; a departure from the well-established principles of impartiality; the avoidance of the primacy of politics and the focus instead on band-aid solutions through peacekeeping; and an unwillingness to walk away from the quagmires into the sunset — these are all part of the burgeoning philosophical dilemma facing peacekeeping. It would appear that we have blunted peacekeeping as an effective tool. Additionally, there are appalling cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. Peacekeepers turning into predators is our worst nightmare come true. India has fully supported the initiative to create a trust fund for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. It was the first to contribute to that fund. It is disappointing that only three other countries have followed suit.

It is now 16 months since the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations concluded its report (see A/70/95), yet tangible progress and the implementation of its recommendations are still awaited. Against that inaction, a tally of the disasters that are roiling peacekeeping — the most used tool of the United Nations — makes for worrisome reading.

Those are three key issues but they are also examples of the many ailments of the Organization that need to be addressed. This raises the question whether we are failing in our duty to address these and other problems from which the Organization suffers. Observing the International Day of Non-Violence at the United Nations just three days ago, we heard a dictum coined by Mahatma Gandhi in his interaction with the United Nations as far back as 1947. He said,

> "Begin with a charter of duties of man and I promise the rights will follow as spring follows winter."

Gandhi believed that if each person fulfilled his or her duties to others, no one's rights would be violated.

Fulfilling our duties will correct a lot of what imperils us today. The duty to change what is not working is inherent in our commitment to the Charter of the United Nations. What we have is an Organization that is ailing in many ways. As Member States, it is a part of our duty to address those ailments. Now is as good a time as any to begin that venture.

Mr. Mendoza-García (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his final report (A/71/1) on the work of the Organization. Costa Rica would like to recognize the tireless and determined efforts of the Secretary-General to promote sustainable development. The process for negotiating the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and establishing the Sustainable Development Goals was a milestone in the multilateral process. We are confident that the Agenda will give new direction to the central functions of the Organization. It will be directed towards a more firm, more inclusive, more universal and more sustainable development — one that promotes the creation of peaceful societies, respect for human rights and the rule of law and one that leaves no one behind. We look forward to continue working in that direction and to focus on implementing the Agenda with the next Secretary-General.

Costa Rica recognizes the commitment of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the extraordinary support he gave to the negotiation, signing and entry into force of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The personal commitment of the Secretary-General to promoting this historic Agreement is especially remembered by the Government of Costa Rica. Now that the first threshold in terms of the number of ratifications has been reached, we are enthusiastically looking forward to the 55 per cent threshold for global emitters over the coming weeks so that this important instrument can enter into force as soon as possible. We must now prepare for the most important and most complex stage, which is the process of its implementation.

We recognize the transformational potential of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, and we hope that the very significant political will underpinning both of them will mark an inflection point in terms of the complexity, comprehensiveness and transformative nature of international agreements on sustainable development, and that, thanks to such political will, we shall be able to adopt other needed agreements on peace, security, disarmament and migration.

We pay tribute to the Secretary-General's full commitment to making progress on gender equality and the empowerment of women in a cross-cutting manner throughout the agenda of the United Nations. The establishment of the High-level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment is but one demonstration of that commitment. It recognizes the absolute need to integrate all women into the economic life of our societies. The President of Costa Rica had the honour, at the request of the Secretary-General, to co-chair that Panel. Last September, it submitted its preliminary report, which highlighted the fact that the inclusion of women in economic activity was not just the correct approach, but also the most intelligent one, as it is absolutely necessary to ensure the full and comprehensive implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The tenaciousness of the Secretary-General's drive and support with respect to gender issues deserves praise, and Costa Rica, as a country that believes in gender equality and women's empowerment, hopes that women and girls will continue to be at the centre of our human endeavours.

The Human Rights Up Front initiative and its implementation in the United Nations system must continue so that we improve our capacity to respond to serious violations of human rights and our capacities to work preventively in seeking peace and ensuring human rights for all. The courageous words of the Secretary-General in defence of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex persons should also be highlighted.

Costa Rica would like to recognize the support given to the rule of law as a cross-cutting and enabling way of fulfilling the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations.

The themes that we have highlighted are but part of the legacy left by the Secretary-General, not just over the past year but during his entire term of office, for the benefit of future generations. Therefore, I would like to conclude by expressing our thanks to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for all his efforts and work throughout his term of office.

Mr. Zaayman (South Africa): My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/71/1. South Africa is of the view that the debate on the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization is an apt way to start our activities in the General Assembly, as it allows us to take stock and reflect on the work we are doing as an Organization. The report reflects his clear vision and his firm determination to enhance multilateralism and strengthen the authority and role of the United Nations. The United Nations must remain at the apex of multilateralism in addressing the global challenges that we face.

There are many pertinent issues highlighted in the report. My delegation wishes to focus on three, namely, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the maintenance of international peace and security, and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

South Africa supports the implementation of the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development without any reservations. The triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality that the Agenda seeks to address is in line with South Africa's national development plan as well as the African Union's Agenda 2063. At the core of South Africa's development plan is the objective to guide our policies and programmes in every sector, including how to allocate our budget and skills investment and other resources at the national and local levels in order to move South Africa forward and ensure sustainable livelihoods for all our citizens. That will ensure the domestication of the Sustainable Development Goals as part of our national development plan.

We need a United Nations that is fit for purpose to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report, and the need for this has never been greater. Today, the world is grappling with a multiplicity of new challenges that threaten global peace and security, and therefore require the intervention of the Organization. While we must undoubtedly aim to strengthen the tools at our disposal in addressing conflicts as they arise, we must also emphasize the preventive approach — as highlighted by the Secretary-General in his report — in addressing conflict and its root causes in order to prevent countries that are emerging from conflicts from relapsing. South Africa is convinced that peace and stability in the world will remain elusive if we do not address the nexus between security and development.

We welcome the General Assembly's recognition of the increasing role that regional organizations play in peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts. Regional

organizations are well positioned to understand the causes of armed conflicts owing to their knowledge of the region, which can benefit their efforts in influencing the prevention or resolution of such conflicts. Furthermore, they have a comparative advantage owing to their increasing political resolve to address a situation. It is beneficial for the United Nations to work closely with regional and subregional organizations in their mediation and peacemaking efforts. Over the past few years we have witnessed the practical advantages of that cooperation in the area of peacekeeping on the African continent. While we acknowledge that the primary responsibility for international peace and security lies with the Security Council, it is often regional organizations such as the African Union that are the first responders in the stabilizing of crisis situations.

The African continent is one of the largest troop contributors to United Nations-mandated peace operations. Additionally, the continent has made significant progress in activating its Peace and Security Architecture. That notwithstanding, more needs to be done to ensure that the continent has adequate capacity to address its peace and security challenges. In that regard, we are calling on the United Nations to support and adequately fund the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security.

The threat of terrorism continues to challenge the international community. While the threat grows and mutates, the results of terrorist acts remain the same: sowing devastation, killing and maiming innocent people, damaging property and infrastructure, fostering fear in local communities, undermining social and economic confidence and, in many cases, entrenching the forces of poverty. Conflict situations, including in the Middle East and North Africa, have also created fertile environments for terrorist groups to carry out their brutal acts with impunity. The activities of those groups have complicated the search for political solutions, which are necessary for the re-establishment of peace, security and stability and the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms.

To counter the narratives and ideologies of terrorism in the medium to long term, international cooperation must address the conditions and contexts that drive it. Military approaches alone cannot resolve the challenge of terrorism. The United Nations, with the broad range of expertise and tools at its disposal, is in the best position to lead the coordination of international efforts in this regard. South Africa continues to support the central role of the United Nations in countering terrorism and strengthening the multilateral system to take effective measures within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Initiatives to further improve coordination and cooperation among the United Nations entities involved in countering terrorism and coordination between the United Nations and regional structures should be encouraged and supported.

We acknowledge the work being done by the General Assembly and Security Council in guiding the international community's response to terrorism. The General Assembly, with its universal membership, has a valuable contribution to make. Both the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism have added to the tools at our disposal to counter this threat, as they are premised not only on addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism but also on respect for the rule of law and human rights. While great strides have been made, much more needs to be done. My delegation looks forward to contributing in that regard.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for their services to the Organization. We assure them and all Member States of our commitment to ensuring that we progress closer to our shared goal of achieving a better world for all.

Mr. Shaltut (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation has perused the report (A/71/1) of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. We would like to thank the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for their efforts, especially those expended on the preparation of the report. The topics dealt with by the Secretary-General in his report are of great importance for my delegation and for the Government of National Accord, which will represent Libya in this international forum. Among these important topics are sustainable development, migration and respect for, and the promotion of, human rights and international peace and security.

As the Assembly is aware, my country is passing through a transitional phase. This phase has involved meetings that led to the formation of the Presidential

Council of the Government of National Accord, which began its work in March.

The question of migration is one that concerns all States. With a long Mediterranean border of 2,000 kilometres, my country — like others — is suffering from the repercussions of the migration problem. While we express our sympathy with all those who have found themselves in difficult situations, we want to indicate that Libya, in its current situation, cannot resolve the problem on its own. Libya sympathizes with the victims who have drowned in the sea or died in the desert; however, this major question requires the assistance of the United Nations, the international community, developed countries and countries possessing the appropriate technologies.

From Libya's point of view, the issue of migration necessitates working to establish and promote development projects in the countries of origin so as to provide employment opportunities for those who might otherwise seek to migrate, thereby enabling them to work in their own countries. Such projects would help to prevent the catastrophic conditions that have befallen those desiring to improve their lives by leaving their countries of origin and heading to other countries that might offer a better standard of living and a better life.

As the Assembly is aware, Libya has been cooperating with the various United Nations bodies, including the Security Council and the Human Rights Council. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya has been working in cooperation with Libyan national authorities, particularly with the Government of National Accord. Cooperation has been fruitful and constructive. Libya has spared no effort to develop such cooperation in order to emerge from the political dilemma it has experienced during the past two years.

The issue of countering terrorism is an extremely important one, and it receives Libya's full attention. The forces of the Presidential Council of the Government of National Accord have declared war on behalf of the world against the terrorists in the city of Serte and are close to eliminating them.

Finally, I would like to express Libya's continued readiness to cooperate with all United Nations bodies and agencies.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have now heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 109. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, as contained in document A/71/1?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): Before calling on the speaker in the exercise the right of reply, may I remind delegations that, in accordance with decision 34/401, statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Ms. Sayed (Pakistan): I take the floor to respond to the remarks made by the Permanent Representative of India with regard to the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

We believe that equating a legitimate struggle for self-determination with terrorism is not only disingenuous, but a travesty of history. The issue of Kashmir cannot be wished away by fanciful rhetoric and claims. Nor can India justify the barbaric killings and atrocities committed against the hapless Kashmiris under any guise.

Jammu and Kashmir is not an integral part of India, and never has been. It is an issue on the agenda of the Security Council and is recognized as disputed territory. This core issue cannot be cast aside by empty rhetoric. It has to be resolved in accordance with Security Council resolutions. There is a need to start a dialogue with Pakistan and the two representatives of Jammu and Kashmir to resolve the issue according to the will of the Kashmiri people. I would like to reiterate that Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, in his address in this forum (see A/71/PV.11), clearly reiterated his offer to India to enter into a serious and sustained dialogue for the peaceful resolution of all outstanding disputes, especially Jammu and Kashmir.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to conclude its consideration of agenda item 109?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 127

Global health and foreign policy

Draft resolution (A/71/L.2)

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now take action on a draft

resolution entitled "Political Declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on antimicrobial resistance", issued as document A/71/L.2.

I should like to remind members that the debate on agenda item 127 is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, 7 December, as announced in the programme of work contained in document A/71/3.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/71/L.2. I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. Ochalik (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): This statement is made in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, and is also made available in advance on the PaperSmart portal.

By paragraph 15 of draft resolution A/71/L.2, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to establish, in consultation with the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Organization for Animal Health, an ad hoc inter-agency coordination group, co-chaired by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the World Health Organization, drawing, where necessary, on expertise from relevant stakeholders, to provide practical guidance for approaches needed to ensure sustained effective global action to address antimicrobial resistance, and also request the Secretary-General to submit a report for consideration by Member States by the seventy-third session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the present declaration and on further developments and recommendations emanating from the ad hoc inter-agency group, including on options to improve coordination, taking into account the global action plan on antimicrobial resistance.

It is anticipated that the request contained in paragraph 15 will constitute an addition to the documentation workload of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of one document of 8,500 words, to be issued in all six languages. That would entail additional requirements in the amount of $37,600 for documentation services in 2018.

Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/71/L.2, the additional resource requirements of $37,600 that would arise for 2018 under section 2 — General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs and Conference Management — would be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/71/L.2, entitled "Political Declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on antimicrobial resistance".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/71/L.2?

Draft resolution A/71/L.2 was adopted (resolution 71/3).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Gómez Camacho (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Contrary to what we would have imagined not long ago in this Hall, we have realized not only that health care is of global interest, but that it must occupy a central role on the agenda of the Organization. As with HIV/AIDS, non-communicable diseases and Ebola, the General Assembly has now, at the highest level, dealt with antimicrobial resistance.

Indeed, resistance to antimicrobial treatments, particularly antibiotics, is one of the greatest threats we are facing today, as we see that people are beginning to die throughout the world from infectious diseases that until recently were routinely treated and cured. It is undoubtedly a crisis when resistant pathogens are being transmitted and multiplying in people, animals and food, and causing 700,000 deaths each year. By 2050, such resistance could generate more deaths than cancer and could take 10 million lives per year. Moreover, its economic impact would then exceed that of the 2008 financial crisis and reach a cost of $100 trillion. That represents between 2 and 3.5 per cent of global gross domestic product. As Margaret Chan has said, this is a slow tsunami that respects no borders.

The term "antimicrobial resistance" once had little meaning. However, today it is understood in all its grave and complex aspects. We know that the solution must be collective and multifaceted, with the support of various United Nations entities. As with many other formidable challenges, antimicrobial resistance is not a North-South issue, or a competition where one party wins and the other party loses. It is a global threat that requires efforts from all of us and, in order to resolve it, we must recognize the specific circumstances

prevailing in each region and country. In addition, the most advanced countries must commit to cooperating with all the other countries.

Furthermore, the roles of the pharmaceutical and food industries will be key. We have seen major commitments on the part of both. However, we must continue strengthening knowledge and mutual understanding with a view to establishing the conditions that will enable the pharmaceutical industry to develop new antibiotics and the food industry to reduce its use of antibiotics. Both sectors must continue increasing their understanding of the social challenges and determining which actions to undertake or to end.

I would like to thank President Thomson and President Lykketoft for entrusting this task to me, and to extend my gratitude to the organizations and delegations whose constructive work led to the robust Political Declaration.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I would like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador Juan José Gómez Camacho of Mexico, facilitator of the informal consultations, who demonstrated great ability and patience in his conduct of the discussions and complex negotiations on the outcome document. I also thank Member States for their valuable contributions in reaching agreement on draft resolution A/71/L.2).

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 127.

Programme of work

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): Before adjourning, I would like to briefly refer to the consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 115, entitled "Election of the members of the International Law Commission", which will take place on Thursday, 3 November.

In order to facilitate the election of members of the International Law Commission, and in accordance with the established practice, the General Assembly will take an advance decision on the matter of requesting the Secretariat to issue a consolidated list of candidates reflecting all submissions and changes received so far. It is my intention to consult the Assembly in that regard at the plenary meeting to be held tomorrow morning, 6 October, as announced in *The Journal of the United Nations*.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

United Nations A/71/PV.25

General Assembly
Seventy-first session

Official Records

25th plenary meeting
Thursday, 6 October 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Documentation for the election of the members of the International Law Commission: review of the list of candidates

The President: I would like to consult the General Assembly on a matter concerning sub-item (b) of agenda item 114 on the election of the members of the International Law Commission, which has been scheduled to take place on Thursday, 3 November.

On that day, the Assembly will proceed to the election of 34 members of the Commission, whose terms of office are to commence on 1 January 2017. It should be recalled that, in accordance with the statute of the International Law Commission, the Secretary-General communicated to the Governments of Member States, in document A/71/90, the list of candidates submitted within the required time for the submission of nominations — that is, by 1 June 2016. In documents A/71/90/Add.1 to A/71/90/Add.4, the Secretary-General informed the Assembly of developments concerning candidates, including new candidates and withdrawals, since the issuance of document A/71/90. The statements of qualifications of the candidates are contained in A/71/83 and Add. 1.

In these circumstances, it is necessary for the General Assembly to take a decision as to whether the new candidatures should be accepted in spite of the submission of their names subsequent to the deadline and whether they should be incorporated into a consolidated list of candidates.

It has been the practice of the Assembly to incorporate such late submissions into a consolidated list. If I hear no objection, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to request the Secretary-General to issue such a consolidated list of candidates?

It was so decided.

Agenda items 120 and 121

Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

The President: The American writer Mark Twain once observed that "continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection". It is a message of particular relevance to Member States in our ongoing efforts to revitalize the work of the General Assembly.

Since 1991, the United Nations membership has sought to enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly through discussion under the agenda item "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly". It is critical, incremental work that requires a deep commitment to the ideals of the United Nations and a dedication to working to improve the Organization's ability to fulfil its mandate under the Charter.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

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At its sixty-ninth and seventieth sessions, the General Assembly adopted two resolutions that each made significant strides in improving the work of the Organization: resolutions 69/321 and 70/305. Both of these resolutions were shepherded through by Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia and Ambassador Wilfried Emvula of Namibia. I would like to thank them for their hard work and leadership as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly that led to these outcomes.

The inclusion in resolution 69/321 of details on the process to select and appoint the next Secretary-General have transformed and significantly enhanced the legitimacy of that process. The way in which the process was conducted has vindicated the good work done by the Ad Hoc Working Group. I would like to pay particular tribute in this regard to my predecessor, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft. Furthermore, the inclusion in resolution 70/305 of an oath of office, a code of ethics and a series of other measures relating to the President of the General Assembly were particularly prescient developments. I am honoured to be the first President of the General Assembly to begin the term of office by undertaking to fulfil the commitments embedded in these documents, as well as to foster a General Assembly based on ethics, transparency, inclusiveness and effectiveness.

As milestones in the revitalization agenda, resolutions 69/321 and 70/305 have already impacted the work of the Assembly in significant ways, and I would like to touch briefly upon some of these key developments.

The importance of close cooperation and coordination between the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as with the Secretary-General, was emphasized in resolution 70/305. This is an essential development for the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations, particularly as it prepares for the task of supporting the implementation of the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I am deeply committed to doing my part in implementing these provisions. To strengthen transparency and improve coherence across the work of the United Nations system, I have undertaken to inform member States about each of my monthly meetings with the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as with the Secretary-General, and the scope of the discussions held.

General Assembly thematic debates continue to be an important mechanism for member States to discuss issues of critical importance to the membership. I have, however, heard clearly the concerns expressed by many delegations at the proliferation of such debates — mandated or otherwise — over recent years. I therefore plan, during the seventy-first session, to minimize the number of such events and to look at creative ways to ensure that Member States and other stakeholders are able to consider the pressing issues of the day in the most effective and efficient way.

The decision to move the timing of elections for non-permanent members of the Security Council to around six months prior to elected members commencing their roles was implemented for the first time earlier this year. This is a practice that has already been commended by those recently elected members as a positive development that will help to facilitate their smooth assumption of responsibilities.

As regards working methods, I intend to continue my close cooperation with the Chairs of the Main Committees to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the work of those Committees, as well as to enhance synergy and coherence and reduce potential overlapping in the agendas of the General Assembly and its Main Committees, the Economic and Social Council and other related forums, particularly in the light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, I acknowledge that significant work was undertaken during the seventieth session on the alignment of the General Assembly agenda with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This was a process led ably by Ambassador Maria Emma Mejia Vélez of Colombia, and supported by the Chairs of the First and Second Committees and the President of the Economic and Social Council. I look forward to discussing ways to build on these efforts with Member States over the coming session.

With respect to the General Assembly itself, I will be encouraging the incoming Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group to consider ways to strengthen its integrity. In my view, this includes exploring ways to preserve decorum and the special place of the general debate on the calendar of world leaders and the Organization, and to further improve the overall preparation for and effectiveness of this high-level

week. For example, the wisdom of burdening ourselves with four official high-level meetings in the course of the general debate is something that deserves serious consideration. In addition, I would like the focus that was placed on ethics during the seventieth session to be extended to the overall decision-making processes, including in terms of the ethical dimension of elections for positions and roles at the United Nations.

In the matter of the selection and appointment of the next Secretary-General, recent developments have already received significant attention and will continue to be high on the agenda during the seventy-first session. I look forward over the coming days to bringing the appointment process to an orderly conclusion and to facilitating a smooth transition and a strong start for the next Secretary-General. This includes promptly bringing Member States and the Secretary-General-designate together to enable them to engage in substantive dialogues on issues such as the appointment of senior officials or the reform of the Secretariat. Throughout this process, I have tasked two special advisers from my Office with engaging in consultations with Member States and interested groups. They will be advising me on the best way forward. Following the finalization of the selection and appointment process for the next Secretary-General, there will be many lessons to be learned and considered by the Ad Hoc Working Group.

Resolutions 69/321 and 70/305 provide solid ground for future deliberations to enhance the process, including ways to strengthen the role of the General Assembly and to enhance transparency and accountability of the process.

Finally, efforts to strengthen the accountability, transparency and institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly are already enhancing the functioning of the Office of the President of the General Assembly. In addition to the oath of office and the code of ethics, as part of my commitment to transparency, I have undertaken to ensure that all financial support to the Office will be channelled through the United Nations Trust Fund, where all sources of funds and expenditures will be subjected to public scrutiny. I also intend to ensure that at the end of the seventy-first session, the records and institutional memory of the President of the General Assembly's Office will be preserved by the United Nations record-keeping and archiving facilities, and that a handover summary of best practices and lessons learned will be made available to all Member States.

I am acutely aware of the importance of a smooth transition between General Assembly presidencies, which can be made difficult by calendar arrangements and other factors. Among other issues, we therefore need to look carefully at the timing of the transition in order to enable the incoming President of the General Assembly enough time in office to ensure that the week of high-level meetings runs as efficiently as possible. I look forward to discussing, in due course, ways to improve continuity and transitions further with the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. I would also like to thank Member States once again, as well as the Secretariat — particularly the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management — and the United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes for their support of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, including through secondments of staff.

Much important work lies ahead for all of us in our efforts to strengthen and revitalize the General Assembly and to ensure its role as the pre-eminent deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. The General Assembly's central role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is paramount, and we need to ensure that we too are essentially fit for purpose. I am currently looking to appoint co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, in order to enable it to continue its important work during the seventy-first session. I look forward to the Assembly's continued active contribution to the process in the work ahead.

I now call on the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Van Den Akker (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with my statement.

I wish to thank you, Sir, for convening today's plenary meeting. We look forward to working with you in the negotiations on resolutions throughout the coming

weeks and months. I would like to thank the President of the Assembly at its seventieth session, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, for his oversight of and engagement in the General Assembly revitalization process. I would also like to extend my sincerest gratitude to the previous co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representatives of Croatia and Namibia, Mr. Vladimir Drobnjak and Mr. Wilfried Emvula, for their excellent work. We wish the new co-Chairs success for the coming year and express our support for the upcoming work, in the hope of continuing the significant progress made in the last session.

The two most recent resolutions on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly have been ground-breaking. Resolution 69/321 paved the way for a more transparent Secretary-General selection process this year, which has improved the public image and accountability of the United Nations. This landmark year's selection process has almost finished and, in that regard, we look forward to the General Assembly plenary session next week. We are grateful to you, Mr. President, for the nomination of two special advisers, Ambassador Ioannis Vrailas and Ambassador Sofia Borges, to facilitate the outcome of the process.

Resolution 70/305 also contains significant new elements that strengthen the accountability, transparency and institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly. In particular, they include the release of detailed information on the finances, official travel, staffing and activities of the Office of the President, the release of a written handover summary of best practices and lessons learned to the President's successor and to Member States in a standardized format, and the preservation of records and institutional memory during the President's term in office by using existing record-keeping and archiving facilities. Also noteworthy in resolution 70/305 is the agreement on the release of financial disclosures on assumption and completion of the President's duties, in line with the existing United Nations financial disclosure programme. In addition, we agree that all contributions should be vetted through the United Nations Ethics Office and that non-in-kind contributions should be channelled through the United Nations Trust Fund.

Particular progress was also made in other areas, such as the establishment of a code of ethics to be observed by the President, including the members of his or her Office, and of an individual oath of office, as we already witnessed a few weeks ago when you, Mr President, assumed the position. That is complemented by the decision to enhance cooperation and interaction between the permanent missions and the Secretariat through an interactive and comprehensive dialogue. Another aspect worth highlighting is the new progress in efforts to create equal opportunities for men and women and to ensure a gender balance throughout the United Nations system and in the Office of the President. All these and other elements agreed upon in the recently adopted resolution will ensure that the public image of the United Nations, in particular the Office of the President, are enhanced.

Effective multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core, remains key. Our top priorities remain the strengthening of the Organization, based on effective and sustainable funding that is in line with real capacity to pay; and increasing the efficiency of its functioning, an area in which there is scope to do more. In that context, we continue to be committed to revitalization and to supporting efforts aimed at strengthening the role and authority of the General Assembly, in line with the Charter of the United Nations and relevant resolutions. That is especially needed in the context of the global challenges the world is facing today. At the same time, we wish to reiterate that it is imperative for concrete steps to be taken at all levels, with a view to spending more wisely, delivering in new ways and ensuring that the Organization functions within the agreed budget levels. An unceasing effort to find new and creative ways to work is essential if we are to achieve a more effective delivery of mandates and the sustainable use of resources.

We believe that revitalization can be ensured only when the General Assembly takes relevant action on issues of common concern to the international community and produces results. By doing so, it lives up to its role as one of the principal organs of the United Nations. The revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is clearly pivotal for the overall reform of the United Nations.

Focusing on the negotiations ahead of us, we believe that this session's resolutions should aim to consolidate the work achieved so far, and we remain committed to working to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the functioning of the General Assembly. In that regard, enhancing the role of the General Committee to support the work of the General Assembly could

be helpful and needs to be further explored. Further streamlining of the work of the different committees and of the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly is still needed.

Finally, let me emphasize the important role of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. I would like to assure you that the European Union and its member States will continue to constructively engage in the proceedings of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

Mr. Bessedik (Algeria): I thank you, Sir, for all your efforts concerning the sensitive issue of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

Let me first thank the co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representatives of Croatia and Namibia, for having achieved positive outcomes at its previous two sessions. The Non-Aligned Movement underlines the importance of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly as a political process rather than a procedural matter, aimed mainly at strengthening the role of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations in the wider United Nations system. The process should therefore be conducted in an inclusive, transparent and efficient manner. A reinvigorated General Assembly in a more responsive environment, fully exerting its role and authority, would significantly contribute to the strengthening of the wider United Nations system, the improvement of international governance and the enhancement of multilateralism.

A thorough evaluation of the status of the implementation of the General Assembly resolutions on this issue and a clear identification of the causes delaying implementation are of the utmost importance, so that constraints can be progressively eliminated and the revitalization of the General Assembly can achieve its full potential. The Movement stresses the importance of implementing the General Assembly resolutions on a non-selective basis, including the provisions related to the revitalization of its work that require follow-up or further action, as indicated in the inventory chart. It is worth highlighting that the implementation of some provisions depends on the political will of all States Members of the United Nations. In that context, we reaffirm the role and authority of the General Assembly, including on questions related to international peace and security, and its intergovernmental, inclusive and democratic character, which have immensely contributed to the promotion of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the achievement of United Nations goals. NAM reaffirms the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations and draws attention to the need to consult all Member States about the initiatives and activities undertaken within the Organization.

In a context of increased global challenges, the Movement reaffirms that the role of the Secretary-General is one of the most important and challenging in the world. His appointment should be more transparent and democratic and should include all Member States through the effective participation of the General Assembly in the selection and appointment process. In a letter dated 13 September, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft expressed his hope that the General Assembly would be able to reach a decision — whether through the designation of co-facilitators or not — on drafting a consensus resolution appointing the next Secretary-General and that, upon receiving the recommendation from the Security Council, the appointment draft resolution could be adopted in a timely manner in order to give the next Secretary-General enough time to prepare. He also expressed the hope — which we echo — that it will be possible to further consolidate and entrench the principles of transparency and inclusivity.

In its statement with regard to the informal meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly on 29 August, NAM reiterated once again that the process of selection and appointment of the new Secretary-General by the General Assembly — one of the most significant ongoing issues addressed by the United Nations this year — should be carried out in full compliance with the General Assembly's mandate. These include the Assembly's consideration of the draft resolution, which should be preceded by wide and extensive consultations with all States Members of the United Nations, and its voting by secret ballot on the recommendation of the Security Council in conformity with rule 141 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

In the light of the latest developments in connection with the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General, NAM continues to call upon the Security Council to consider, not only now but in the future,

the possibility whereby more than one candidacy is endorsed and submitted to the General Assembly in the interest of selecting the best possible candidate from among those possessing and displaying, inter alia, commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter, extensive leadership and administrative and diplomatic experience.

Furthermore, NAM calls on the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council to continue to hold timely informal meetings for an exchange of views on the ongoing process of the selection and appointment of the future Secretary-General. In the course of the identification and appointment of the best person for the post of Secretary-General, including from among women candidates, due regard shall continue to be given to regional rotation and also to gender equality, as stipulated in paragraph 38 of resolution 69/321 and in paragraph 59 of resolution 51/241. We should not forget that it is up to the General Assembly to select and appoint the Secretary-General, and it is up to the General Assembly to decide upon the recommendation of the Security Council.

We also believe that prevailing practices in the election of executive heads elsewhere in the United Nations system could be suitable for the appointment of the Secretary-General. We therefore recommend considering existing practices. Moreover, NAM would like to emphasize the issue of promises made by candidates in exchange for the support of the permanent members of the Security Council, which is described in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2011 (A/66/34).

We consider that no Member State should have a privileged position in this matter. It is therefore important that candidates not be pressured, either before or after being appointed, into giving posts in the Secretariat to people of any particular nationality in return for political support, since that is clearly contrary to the spirit of the Charter. The selection of the new Secretary-General will test our capacity to live up to the ethical standard required. The General Assembly must not be left out of the picture or merely be asked to rubber-stamp decisions taken by the Security Council.

While we recognize the role of the Security Council, we look forward to a new form of positive cooperation, with broader acceptance and efficiency of the missions and functions of the Secretary-General. That issue, one of utmost importance to all of us, was raised in two letters sent to the President, the first on behalf of NAM, dated 29 June 2016, the second on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, dated 18 May 2016. On 29 August, a meeting was organized by the co-Chairs to explore those issues with the membership, in response to the invitation of the President. We hope that the process of consultation will continue throughout the negotiations on the draft resolution appointing the Secretary-General.

We take this opportunity to request further clarifications from the President on the next steps and the necessary preparatory procedures to organize broad, transparent and inclusive consultations with all Member States before submitting the resolution on the selection and appointment of the tenth Secretary-General.

Ms. Kasese-Bota (Zambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In conclusion, I would like to express our appreciation for the fact that resolution 70/305, the most recent on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, was adopted by consensus. Nevertheless, we have to emphatically recall that our Group has always shown great flexibility, even when we had misgivings. We hope that our concerns will be fully taken into consideration during the next round of negotiations — which normally should have a positive outcome — on the submission of a draft resolution concerning the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and its adoption by the Assembly in a transparent, democratic manner.

We note that we have repeatedly emphasized some issues. We will continue to do so until we have achieved our objectives.

Mr. Phansourivong (Lao People's Democratic Republic): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), comprising 10 member States: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

At the outset, let me congratulate Mr. Vladimir Drobnjak, Permanent Representative of Croatia, and Mr. Wilfried Emvula, Permanent Representative of Namibia, on their excellent work as co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. ASEAN warmly welcomes

the progress made during their co-chairmanship, as reflected in resolution 70/305, which was adopted by consensus on 13 September. ASEAN would also like to express its appreciation to Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly at its seventieth session, for his commitment and effort in moving forward the agenda on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, especially his commitment to transparency and openness.

ASEAN would like to take this opportunity once again to congratulate the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, Mr. Peter Thomson. ASEAN firmly believes that, under his leadership, the process of revitalization of the General Assembly will yield more positive results.

ASEAN is pleased with the implementation of resolution 69/321, on the process of the selection and appointment of the next Secretary-General, particularly the holding of informal dialogues between the candidates and the General Assembly, which has provided an opportunity for candidates to interact with the States Members of the United Nations. Moving forward, ASEAN believes that the agreement reached in resolution 70/305 should be implemented faithfully to provide for a transparent and inclusive selection process that would ensure that the best possible candidate is selected for the post of Secretary-General.

It is important that Member States be provided with an opportunity to further reinvigorate and revitalize the United Nations. ASEAN believes that revitalization will make the Organization more effective, transparent and inclusive, and thereby better equipped to respond to the needs of Member States. We should all work together to make the General Assembly play its role as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

ASEAN welcomes the reaffirmation in resolution 70/305 of the importance and benefit of interaction between the General Assembly and international or regional forums and organizations dealing with global matters of concern to the international community. ASEAN takes note of the report to the General Assembly on the strategic alignment of future sessions of the General Assembly with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

ASEAN recognizes that complementarities exist between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. We also recognize the importance of dialogue and cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations in taking forward the work on enhancing such complementarities, as reflected in the ASEAN-United Nations Plan of Action 2016-2020.

ASEAN stands ready to support the strengthening of the institutional memory of the Office of the President. The relevant provisions of resolution 70/305 should be fully implemented. ASEAN expresses its thanks and appreciation to those Member States that have seconded their nationals to the Office of the President. ASEAN is pleased about the adoption of the code of ethics and oath of office by the General Assembly this year as a means to reinforce transparency, accountability and the moral and ethical integrity of the President and his Office.

In conclusion, ASEAN reaffirms its commitment to engage effectively and constructively with all Member States in order to ensure the successful outcome of the Ad Hoc Working Group session on revitalizing the work of the General Assembly. We are confident that, with the political goodwill of all Member States, we will be able to reach consensus and achieve concrete outcomes.

Ms. Abdullah (Malaysia): At the outset, I wish to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Croatia and of Namibia, co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly at its seventieth session. I join other colleagues in extending our appreciation for their excellent stewardship and leadership, and the commitment shown by all concerned in enabling the Ad Hoc Working Group to make greater progress towards our common goal of revitalizing the General Assembly in all its aspects, including its role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency.

My delegation is encouraged by the recent adoption of resolution 70/305, entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly", and that of its predecessor, resolution 69/321. Malaysia aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Laos on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN).

United Nations reform, particularly revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, remains an important annual agenda item for all the members of that body. My delegation appreciates the updated annex to the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group (A/70/1003), which has enabled Member States to keep abreast of the implementation of the previous resolutions on

revitalization. We welcome the efforts made by the Secretariat in providing such updates, which have provided Member States with a better understanding of the reasons behind any lack of implementation of the resolutions. While the ongoing review of the inventory of resolutions on revitalization is a step in the right direction, the process should not stop there. Without a doubt, the next logical step is to find ways to address the underlying causes and remove any constraints, thereby paving the way for the eventual implementation of the resolutions.

Malaysia is of the view that we should persevere in our collective effort to ensure that the General Assembly remains the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. It is the highest authoritative body of the United Nations in that it represents all 193 Member States.

We welcome the General Assembly's continuing support in enhancing United Nations interactions with international, regional and subregional organizations such as ASEAN and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on various global issues. Malaysia will work closely with other Member States in discussing the drafting of the proposed resolution on the appointment of the Secretary-General in a timely manner and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the mandates and other relevant appointment procedures.

Finally, I wish to reiterate my delegation's commitment to working constructively with all Member States in ensuring that the General Assembly maintains its role as the principal policymaking and norm-setting organ of the United Nations.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome today's meeting of the General Assembly on the revitalization of its work. We support realistic initiatives to increase the effectiveness of the Assembly's work in many ways that can be achieved by improving its working methods and streamlining its agenda, which is now seriously burdened. We presume that there is a need to continue the transition to considering some agenda items on a two- or three-year basis and removing those items that are no longer timely.

We endorse the proposal to unburden the high-level week, particularly the general debate, because when Heads of State and Government and Ministers for Foreign Affairs are in New York, they already have a full timetable of bilateral contacts. It would be sensible to limit the number of high-level events at that time. Those remaining should be spread throughout the session of the General Assembly.

It goes without saying that any attempt to carry out reforms should be based on strict compliance with the distribution of prerogatives among the principal organs of the United Nations, as set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

The Security Council is today completing the process of selecting a new Secretary-General. The candidacy of António Guterres has been recommended to the General Assembly for its consideration. Resolution 69/321 introduced a range of new elements into the procedure for selecting the new Secretary-General, and the recently adopted resolution 70/305 strengthened them. Russia played an active role in their coordination.

We are prepared to engage in further constructive work to optimize existing procedures with the involvement of all Member States. All ideas are worthy of careful consideration. Having said that, we must not forget that our main objective is for the post of Secretary-General to be held by the most worthy candidate. The introduction of new initiatives not based on consensus may lead to divisions in the General Assembly and seriously complicate the process for the selection and appointment of a new Secretary-General that is already under way. We are not, therefore, ready to support any proposal to enact further changes in the existing procedure.

The same applies to the preparation of the General Assembly resolution on the appointment of the Secretary-General. We are opposed to attempts to load that document with controversial political elements when it is essentially a technical document. Furthermore, lengthy discussions on the draft might lead to a delay in the appointment of Mr. Ban Ki-moon's successor, which would be unwelcome from a political perspective and would hardly help the new Secretary-General to familiarize himself with all aspects of the work of the Organization.

In considering the revitalization of the General Assembly, we hear criticisms of the Security Council, including the suggestion that at times it impinges on the prerogatives of other United Nations bodies. We share such concerns. Our Council colleagues are certainly aware of our hesitancy about proposals that the Security Council should consider thematic subjects, especially

generic ones. We believe that the Council should focus on country-based subjects and on issues regarding which it can and should take specific decisions.

We note that at times the Security Council holds open debates that do not directly relate to issues concerning the maintenance of international peace and security. We are sometimes of the impression that the General Assembly has in fact moved into the Security Council Chamber. We believe that debates of that nature should take place in the General Assembly, where all States Members of the United Nations can speak on an equal footing. That would give the revitalization of the General Assembly an additional chance of success.

Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia): Croatia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I will make some brief additional remarks on the issue at hand.

First and foremost, I am confident that I also speak for Ambassador Emvula of Namibia, my valued co-Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, when I say that we were deeply honoured to facilitate such a vital, important and far-reaching process during both the sixty-ninth and seventieth sessions of the General Assembly. We have truly enjoyed two fruitful years of deliberations in the Ad Hoc Working Group, and we express once again our appreciation for being entrusted with such an important task.

Having before us the very tangible results embodied in resolutions 69/321 and 70/305, resolutions that more than once have been referred to as milestone documents, we can state with certainty that we have indeed proved what can be achieved when there is a willingness on the part of all Member States to engage in a thorough, substantive debate on numerous crucial aspects of the issue of General Assembly revitalization. And through those resolutions the value of consensus once again proved to be pivotal.

Notable advances were most definitely made in some key domains of the work of the Organization, in particular those related to the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General, and to increasing the efficiency, transparency and accountability of the General Assembly and the Office of its President. How do we see this being implemented in practice? Let me give a couple of noteworthy examples.

Several days ago, the handover report of the outgoing President was circulated to Member States. And we recently witnessed a historic moment when the incoming President of the Assembly took the oath of office in this very Hall. We are in the very final stages of the selection and appointment of the next Secretary-General, a process that for the first time, was conducted in an open and inclusive manner, in accordance with resolution 69/321. Some issues were successfully addressed and provided with appropriate, effective solutions. On the other hand, some issues are still to be addressed properly and inclusively during this session and beyond.

I believe we established in our previous deliberations that the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly serves as an important platform for exchanging views on pivotal parts of reform processes and for exploring their potential scope and depth. Even when it is not possible to reach consensus on certain elements, it is beyond doubt that the entire membership profits considerably from such exchanges of views. The Working Group should therefore continue to address various issues of interest with a view to deepening our understanding on different positions and to try to bring them closer together.

It should also be noted that during the seventieth session, the Ad Hoc Working Group invited members of the Secretariat on several occasions to provide Member States with additional information and answers to some pertinent questions on the issues at hand. The interactive dialogue with the Secretariat proved to be very useful and mutually beneficial, and it stands out as a practice that is certainly worth following in the future. In that regard, to give just one example, the issue of publishing a *Journal of the United Nations* in all six official languages throughout the year particularly comes to mind.

There are without a doubt many areas to focus on in the forthcoming years and ample room for improvement within the framework of the revitalization of the General Assembly, but I remain confident that the constructive cooperation and consensus-based work we have seen so far, further guided by the able leadership of President Thomson at the seventy-first session, will continue to pave the way for new practices and set new standards in the functioning of the General Assembly.

I thank the Assembly once again for its support, cooperation and confidence.

The Acting President: I further wish to reiterate the President of the General Assembly's gratitude to the Ambassadors of Croatia and of Namibia for co-chairing the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): As we get an early start on this year's revitalization process, the United States would first like to thank the past year's co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representatives of Croatia and Namibia, for their expert leadership throughout the year's debates and their impressive work to maintain consensus on the annual resolution.

During the course of the past year's meetings, the Working Group discussed a very wide range of issues related to the operations of the General Assembly. One area that was particularly important was the work done on increasing transparency and accountability in the Office of the President. Addressing institutional deficiencies in that Office is critical, and we were particularly encouraged by the symbolism of the code of ethics created for members of the Office and the oath inaugurated by our new President when he assumed his duties in September.

For the past few years, the Ad Hoc Working Group has committed much of its time and energy to the process of the selection of the next Secretary-General. As we all know, the Security Council is this morning providing its formal recommendation. We think that António Guterres will be an extraordinary leader of the United Nations. With his appointment by the General Assembly, Mr. Guterres will take the helm of the United Nations at one of the most consequential moments in recent history. He will inherit some of the most complicated challenges to international peace and security, to human rights and to development.

The United Nations needs a visionary leader in these complicated times, and we believe we have found one in António Guterres. With more population displacement in the world than at any time since the Second World War, Mr. Guterres will leverage his past experience as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to give greater attention to the intense, urgent and often dire needs of displaced peoples. The United States is confident in Mr. Guterres's leadership, his dedication to transparency, effectiveness, accountability and fiscal discipline and his commitment to the founding principles and the aspirations of the United Nations.

At UNHCR, António Guterres demonstrated a capacity to deliver real results for the people who needed it most, while reforming a bureaucracy in need of change. The United Nations and the brave men and women who serve the Organization, often in dangerous places far from their home, need and deserve the kind of results-oriented leadership that Mr. Guterres has shown throughout his career. He is in our view the clear choice to oversee the Organization through these uncertain times. We have been guided in this process in large part by the innovations contained in resolution 69/321 and reinforced in resolution 70/305 at the previous session.

The United States believes that these revitalization processes have been carried out faithfully, and we have been strong supporters. Ultimately, we believe the Security Council has put forward a candidate behind whom Member States will rally and whose appointment will send the strongest message that the Organization has selected a leader who can help unify us around the common cause of advancing the noble and critical goals of the United Nations.

As we seem to be starting the revitalization work earlier this year, we hope that will provide opportunities for the Ad Hoc Working Group to return to some of the central issues we believe should be our priority. During the past several years, the Working Group has been called on to look beyond its core mission of increasing the Assembly's efficiency, effectiveness and transparency. However, to broaden our scope beyond those central concerns or to seek to address issues that are considered in parallel in other bodies or committees will only dilute our efforts and run counter to our principal goal of streamlining and rationalizing the Assembly's work.

Going forward, we should prioritize tangible aspects of revitalization that will result in real improvements for the work of this important body. These include streamlining and prioritizing the agenda to avoid wasteful overlap, with an eye to removing outdated topics and biennializing or triennializing what we can. Freeing the General Assembly's agenda of outdated topics would allow it more time to address important contemporary issues, which could serve to increase focus on, and the visibility of, the important work of this body. We should also look to improve the practices and working methods of the Main Committees.

The United States looks forward to continuing its active participation in the revitalization work of the General Assembly and to working with all fellow Member States together on these important issues.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): Singapore aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Laos on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

I would like to make five additional points.

First, the revitalization of the General Assembly is a work in progress. We have made great strides during the past two years with the adoption of the two milestone resolutions 69/321 and 70/305 under the able leadership of the Permanent Representatives of Croatia and Namibia. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate them. However, we must not rest on our laurels. As already stated, the process to improve the work of the General Assembly and its processes must continue, and it must continue on the basis of consensus and enlarging the circle of consensus.

Secondly, we welcome the President's commitment to strengthening the transparency, accountability and institutional memory of his Office. We support the practical initiatives taken by Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, the previous President of the Assembly, notably in preparing and circulating a handover report, which we think has helped not only to strengthen the institutional memory of the Office of the President but also to promote greater transparency in its work. We suggest that the President should build on the handover report by compiling a list of best practices that can be adopted by future incoming Presidents. We also welcome the President's decision to retain several staff members, including his predecessor's Chef de Cabinet. We believe that such initiatives will promote greater continuity and strengthen the operational effectiveness of the Office. We urge the next Secretary-General to make that issue a priority, and we look forward to seeing the Secretary-General's proposals for reviewing the budget allocation for the Office of the President.

Thirdly, the efforts to make the selection and appointment process of the Secretary-General and other executives more open and transparent must continue. We welcome the new standard of openness and transparency, ushered in by former President Lykketoft, that has been established for the selection and appointment of the next Secretary-General. In that regard, we look forward to having an opportunity as soon as possible for the General Assembly to engage in a meaningful interactive dialogue with the Secretary-General designate, and we hope that such an informal dialogue can take place before his formal appointment by the Assembly.

Singapore would also like to suggest that the President of the Assembly consider initiating a regular dialogue with the Secretary-General, which could take the form of a regularly held town-hall meeting with all the members of the Assembly, presided over by the President. The aim would be to continue to build on the directions and understanding established between the General Assembly and the incoming Secretary-General.

The fourth point I would like to make is that the improvements in the appointment process must not stop with the Secretary-General but should extend to all other senior appointments within the Organization. We call on the next Secretary-General to make appointments based on merit, taking into account gender and geographical balance, while also ensuring the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. We do not believe that appointments of senior officials, particularly Under-Secretaries-General and Assistant Secretaries-General, should be considered as being part of any deal or previously agreed package among a handful of countries.

Fifthly and finally, my delegation considers the issue of improving the working methods of the General Assembly and its Main Committees to be very important. One priority is ensuring that the Assembly's agendas, especially those of its Second and Third Committees, and those of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, are working coherently together to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Our leaders have adopted the 17 Goals and 169 targets, and the onus is on all of us to ensure that we deliver on them.

We are happy to note that the President has made implementation of the 2030 Agenda a key priority. We look forward to his strategy paper on the subject and will work with him to see how best the United Nations can work with Member States in order to make a difference for our citizens. I would also like to endorse the President's comments on the need to review the arrangements for the high-level week at the start of the Assembly's new session. We should aim for fewer high-

level meetings but try to ensure that the ones we have are more focused and effective.

I would like to conclude by saying that we have every confidence that the President will build on the strong foundations laid down by his predecessor and take the General Assembly to new heights of transparency, accountability, efficiency and legitimacy. My delegation stands ready to continue working closely with him and his team and making a positive contribution to that process.

Mr. Minami (Japan): I would like to start by thanking the President for convening today's meeting and for his statement, which clearly defines his focus and intentions. My delegation concurs with others in considering resolutions 69/321 and 70/305, on revitalization, to be groundbreaking. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to Ambassadors Vladimir Drobnjak of Croatia and Wilfried Emvula of Namibia for their hard work and skill in chairing the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly.

As we all recall, there was an urgent and pressing need for ensuring transparency in the Office of the President of the General Assembly during the previous session. Indeed, the oath of office and code of ethics established for the President were the most important achievements of resolution 70/305. My delegation would like to express its appreciation for the commitment of President Thomson and his team to continuing to ensure the Office's transparency. We will spare no effort in continuing to work with the Office on this very important matter.

Regarding the selection of the next Secretary-General, my delegation welcomes the recommendation of Mr. António Guterres that the Security Council has just made to the General Assembly. Article 97 of the Charter of the United Nations stipulates that "[t]he Secretary-General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council". While it is legitimate that the entire membership of the Assembly should be involved in that question, we do not have the luxury of time, given the number of immediate challenges we face today. Since no interruption can be allowed, it is our shared duty in the General Assembly to appoint the next Secretary-General as soon as possible,so that the Secretary-General-designate has enough time to prepare for the transition from his predecessor. The President circulated a letter on that point to all the Permanent Representatives on 23 September. My delegation welcomes the initiative he has taken to move things forward as quickly as possible. We will certainly be discussing the subject in the very near future.

I would now like to touch on the subject of the decision-making process in the Assembly. While the General Assembly has appointed the Secretary-General by acclamation since 1971, the records show that the first three Secretaries-General were appointed by a vote in the Assembly. It would be interesting for us to revisit the past practice of acclamation and discuss the issue thoroughly. If a vote were held, it would give the Assembly a voice independent of the Security Council. However, my delegation would like to emphasize that a Secretary-General should receive the unanimous support of the Member States at the end of the process.

During the course of the seventy-first session, it will be important to continue our discussions of revitalization of the Assembly, and particularly and essentially of its working methods. Japan has been very active on the issue of improving working methods. For example, resolution 68/307 moved the dates of the Security Council and Economic and Social Council elections from October to June. In order to achieve the resolution's intended goal of giving new members more time to prepare for membership, Japan, as Chair of the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, proposed that the Informal Working Group revisit the transitional arrangements for newly elected Council members. On 15 July, after intensive consultations, the Security Council issued a new presidential note, contained in document S/2016/619, which now invites newly elected members to Council meetings starting on 1 October. The note also brings more transparency and inclusivity to the selection process of the Chairs of subsidiary organs.

The issue of rationalizing the General Assembly's work is also an urgent challenge. As we advocated last year, we should consider biennializing or triennializing the agenda items currently being discussed. We look forward to working with the President on that issue again in the current session.

Just as we moved the Security Council and Economic and Social Council elections to earlier dates, we could also consider holding the election of the President of the General Assembly earlier so that

the President-elect has enough time to set up a team and prepare for the handover. My delegation already made that proposal at the March meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group. I believe that the idea is in line with suggestions made by several of the Chairs of the Main Committees that stress the need to hold early elections in order to ensure a smooth transition.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming that Japan stands ready to support the President of the General Assembly and to contribute constructively to discussions of the revitalization of the Assembly's work aimed at further enhancing the effectiveness and transparency of the United Nations.

Ms. Krisnamurthi (Indonesia): Indonesia would first like to thank the President for convening this very important joint debate. We would like to associate ourselves with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Many of the challenges confronting our world today are multidimensional and interconnected, and require a response that is also multidimensional, interconnected and well supported by all of us. There is no better platform for dealing with the gamut of global issues than the General Assembly, for it represents, uniquely, the entirety of the United Nations membership, with its rich insights and collective wisdom. The Assembly members' actions, ownership and support are essential to arriving at solutions that can deliver the goods. And while the General Assembly should examine problems of concern to its member States and come up with cogent answers, its members should also effectively implement the resolutions it adopts.

Over the years, the Assembly's Main Committees and subsidiary organs have made commendable progress on a number of issues. The Assembly's high-level meetings on critical problems such as epidemics, natural disasters, peace and security and development have also been vital to enhancing our shared understanding and garnering international support. Yet it is also evident that there are gaps in implementation efforts. All stakeholders should shoulder their responsibilities for implementing Assembly resolutions and decisions, which in turn contributes to the urgent goal of revitalizing the Assembly.

Indonesia fully supports strengthening the role and authority of the General Assembly in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. It is very important that we all promote the Assembly's central position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative United Nations organ. In that regard, Indonesia applauds the efforts of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly, under its co-Chairs during the seventieth session, the Ambassadors of Croatia and Namibia. The Ad Hoc Working Group's examination of all four topics before it and proposals on them, as reflected in its latest annual report and inventory chart (A/70/1003), highlight areas of significant progress as well as those that require action.

The past year has seen some key advances that we should build on. Beginning with the landmark resolution 69/321, the joint letter from the Presidents of the Security Council and General Assembly on soliciting candidates for the position of Secretary-General, and the subsequent informal dialogues between Member States and candidates, have opened a new window in making the process of selecting the Secretary-General more participatory. Together, we should see to it that the General Assembly continues to play a leading role in ensuring that the current and future processes for selecting and appointing the Secretary-General are more open, participatory and transparent.

It is also essential that the appointments of executive heads and other senior officials, both in the Secretariat and in the field, be clear examples of a merit-based and balanced geographic representation. In particular, qualified nationals from underrepresented developing countries should be given due consideration.

The seventieth session also saw the elections to the Economic and Social Council and to the non-permanent seats in the Security Council moved forward so that they are now held six months in advance, another positive development. Such improvements in working methods should continue.

Indonesia welcomes resolution 70/305, which builds on resolution 69/321. It breaks new ground, particularly regarding the transparency and accountability of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, and we strongly support that. However, while measures such as the institution of an oath of office, a code of conduct, mandated record-keeping and financial disclosure are welcome, it is vital that the Office of the President also have an adequate budget, with the human resources it needs to ensure its optimal performance, which must

include robust dissemination and outreach to global audiences.

A key subject before the General Assembly at this session and others to come is the effective facilitation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Another is its role in ensuring that conflict prevention and political solutions are accorded primacy through improvements in regional partnerships and United Nations mechanisms, as has been underscored by the three major reviews of United Nations peace operations, its peacebuilding architecture, and its agenda on women and peace and security.

There are many other critical imperatives, some of them related, such as properly addressing the plight of the 65 million people who are currently displaced around the world. Much needs to be done, and it should be done urgently and collaboratively. The General Assembly has a special role to play in helping to address our global challenges. But it can be only as robust as the political and financial backing that Member States give to it and its Main Committees and subsidiary bodies. Together, let us enable the General Assembly to perform its role fully. The delegation of Indonesia will continue to work tirelessly in the Ad Hoc Working Group and other forums to contribute to and support steps that meaningfully strengthen the General Assembly and its mechanisms.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.